

AN
A B S T R A C T
OF THE
H I S T O R Y
OF THE
B I B L E:
OR, A
SHORT ACCOUNT
OF THE

Most remarkable Things that have happened to the People of GOD; from the Beginning of the WORLD, down to the coming of CHRIST.

FROM THE
SACRED RECORDS
OF THE
OLD TESTAMENT.

By R. C.

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AN
A B S T R A C T
OF THE
HISTORY of the BIBLE.

Chap. I. *From Genesis.*

Of the Creation. Genesis i. ii.

GOD created heaven and earth, all the things we see, and all those which we do not see ; in a word, the whole universe. He created- it of nothing, by his only word, and by his will, and for his own glory : he made it not all at once, but in six days, and in such order as he pleased. The first day he made the light, the second the heavens ; the third day he formed the earth and the seas, and made the herbs, trees, and plants of all sorts to rise out of the earth : the fourth day he made the sun, moon and stars ; the fifth day he made the fishes and the birds ; the sixth day he produced from the earth all other kinds of living creatures, and then he made man to have the command of

all other animals. On the seventh day God rested, that is to say, he ceased to produce any new creatures. When God made man, he formed the body out of the earth, and then breathed into it the breath of life, Gen. ii. that is to say, he created for it a spiritual and immortal soul, made after his own image and likeness; in as much as the soul of man is a spirit like him, capable of knowing and loving him, and made for him. The first man was named Adam; and God gave him for his companion a woman, named Eve; whom he formed of one of his ribs, that he might love her as a part of himself: and then it was that God instituted matrimony. He also placed Adam and Eve in the earthly Paradise, or the delicious garden of Eden, with leave to eat of all the fruits there, except the fruit of *the tree of knowledge*, which he forbid them under pain of death: and this was the only mark of obedience which God required from them. Here they conversed with God, and lived happily, and if they had not sinned would never have died.

2. *Of the Fall of Man by Sin.* Gen. ii.

God in the beginning had also created an innumerable multitude of pure spirits, of a superior nature to man, whom we call the Angels; some of these fell from God by sin, and were condemned to hell. These are the devils, or wicked spirits, who, thro' malice and envy, make

it their business to tempt men, and to cause them to revolt from God. One of these malicious spirits entered into a serpent, and persuaded the woman to eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree: she eat of it, and gave some to her husband, who also eat of it. In that moment their eyes were opened to see and be ashamed of their nakedness, and the rebellion of the flesh against the spirit, and to know the good they had lost of the original grace and innocence. Thus they incurred the sentence of death, both temporal and eternal, became slaves of the devil, liable to all sorts of evils, weak to all kind of good, and strangely propense to *concupiscence*; which is a disorderly love and desire of gratifying ourselves, which turns us off from the love of God, and is the source of all our sins. However, that man might not be left without hope or comfort in his misery, God was pleased even then to reveal and promise to him a Saviour and Redeemer, to come of the seed of the woman, who should crush the serpents head; that is, should destroy the power of the devil, and open to such as believed in him, the gates of a better and everlasting Paradise.

3. *Of the Descendants of Adam, and the general Corruption of Mankind.*

Gen. iv. v. vi.

As Adam and Eve had no children till after their fall, all that were born of them were born

in corruption and sin, and subject to the same miseries as they were, and so were all their posterity. The first children of Adam and Eve were Cain and Abel. These being grown up, offered sacrifices to God ; who was pleased to shew his acceptance of the sacrifice of Abel, and to have no regard to the offerings of Cain. Upon this, Cain through envy murdered his brother ; and his descendants were a very wicked race. About the time of the death of Abel, God gave to Adam another son, whom he called Seth, who was the father of a more godly race. His son Enos *began with solemn worship to call upon the name of the Lord*, Gen. iv. 26. Enos was the father of Cainan ; Cainan was the father of Malaleel, who was the father of Jared ; Jared was the father of Henoch, who *walked with God, and was seen no more amongst men, because God took him away* : Henoch was the father of Mathusala, who lived nine hundred and sixty-nine years, which was the longest life of any recorded in the scriptures : Mathusala was the father of Lamech, and Lamech was the father of Noe, or Noah : these were the patriarchs who lived before the deluge. The descendants of Seth and Enos, for their piety, were called the sons of God ; till falling in love with women of the wicked race of Cain, and marrying with them, they also were corrupted, and the whole earth was filled with iniquity, and God determined to destroy them all.

4. *Of Noah and the Deluge.* Gen. vi. vii.

Noah was a just and perfect man in his generations; he walked with God and was pleading to him. God revealed to him his design of destroying all mankind by an universal flood; and commanded him to make an ark or vessel in the form of a trunk, immensely large, divided into three stories, and capable of containing a couple of every kind of birds and beasts, and provisions to feed them all for a year. Then, by the divine commandment, Noah went into the ark, with his wife and his three sons and their wives, taking with him two of every sort of animals that live upon the earth. And presently the Lord made a dreadful rain to fall for forty days and forty nights, accompanied by a great inundation of the sea; so that the whole earth was under water, even the highest mountains, and all men and animals were destroyed: none were saved but those that were in the ark.

5. *Of the Sons of Noah.*

Noah had three sons, Sem, Cham and Japheth: by these and their offspring the world was re-peopled. But as men began to multiply they began also to grow wicked: their pride put them upon building a city and a tower, the top of which might reach up to the skies; as if it were to secure them from a second deluge. But the

the Almighty put a stop to their building, by confounding their tongues, so that they could not understand one another : whence the name of the place was called *Babel*, that is, *confusion*. And from thence they were dispersed throughout the world. And now kingdoms began to be formed ; and in particular, the tyrant Nimrod, of the race of Cham, laid the foundation of the Babylonian empire. But men grew daily more and more corrupt, till at length, the true knowledge and worship of God, and the observance of the law of nature was almost banished from the earth. And instead of God, men worshipped the sun, the moon and the stars, the elements, the wicked spirits who deluded them, and even brute beasts and senseless idols, in which they imagined a divinity to reside. The true religion only remained with some few holy persons, chiefly of the race of Sem, and of the branch of Heber.

Of the Patriarch Abraham, and of Melchisedech.

Idolatry had began to corrupt the family of Heber, when God was pleased to call Abraham, a man of that family, the tenth in a lineal descent from Noah, to go forth from his country and kindred in Mesopotamia, and to come into the land of Chanaan, which he promised to give to his seed ; and that in his seed all *the nations of the earth should be blessed* ; inasmuch, as the Saviour

our

our of the world should be born of his posterity. Abraham readily obeyed the call, walking always in the presence of God, ever attentive to please him and to worship him in every place. God was pleased with his faith and obedience ; protected him on all occasions, showered down his blessings upon him, and entered into a solemn covenant with him, that a numerous people should come from him, which should possess the promised land ; and that from his seed blessing and grace should be diffused over all the earth : and for a mark of his covenant, he enjoined him and his posterity the sacrament of circumcision. He also gave him a son by miracle, when he was one hundred years old, of Sarah his wife, who had been always barren, and was then past the age of child-bearing. This son he named Isaac ; and on him God was pleased to declare all the promises should be entailed, which he made to his father. When Isaac was grown up, God was pleased, for a farther trial of Abraham's faith and obedience, to command him to offer up this dear son, in sacrifice. He made no reply nor demur, but taking his son with him to the appointed place, after having bound him and laid him on the altar, had his hands stretched out ready to slay him with his sword, when an angel from God stopped him, applauding his obedience, and repeating and renewing all the promises made to him. In Abraham's time lived Melchisedech, king of Salem, priest of the most high God ; of whose parents
and

and family we have no account : we only know, that this extraordinary man met Abraham, when he returned victorious over the four kings (who had carried away his kinsman Lot and all his substance) and that he gave him his blessing in the name of the most high God, and offered for him bread and wine ; and that Abraham gave him the tythes of the spoils. He was a figure of the Saviour of the world, who was to be greater than Abraham, tho' descended from him.

7. Of Lot, and of the Destruction of Sodom. Gen. xix.

Lot was nephew to Abraham, and came along with him to the land of Canaan, and joined with him in the faith and worship of the true God. He went afterwards and lived in the city of Sodom, where his soul was daily afflicted with seeing and hearing the lewdness and wickedness of the inhabitants, (2 Pet. ii. 7. 8.) Their sins crying to heaven for vengeance ; the Lord sent two angels to destroy their city (which he would have spared if ten just men had been found there) and to bring forth Lot from among them. The angels coming in human shape were entertained by Lot, when behold the men of the city beset his house, and would have forced their way in to abuse his guests with unnatural lust ; but the angels struck them with blindness, so that they could not find the door : and early in the morning, they led Lot and his wife and

and his two daughters out of the city ; and bid them save themselves by hasty flight, without looking back, lest they should also be consumed. Then the Lord rained fire and brimstone upon Sodom, and the neighbouring cities of Gomorrah, Adama and Seboim, involved in the like guilt, and destroyed those cities, with all the inhabitants, and all the country about, and all things that spring from the earth : and Lot's wife turning to look back, was changed into a statue of salt.

8. *Of the Patriarchs Isaac and Jacob.*

Isaac, as he inherited the promises and covenant made by God to his father Abraham, so he inherited also his devotion and piety ; *walking*, as the scripture says, (Gen. xlviii. 15.) *always before God*, and ever attentive to please him. God gave him Rebecca to wife, of whom he had two sons, twins, Esau and Jacob. Esau was the first born, but profanely sold his first birth-right to his brother Jacob for a mess of pottage : and when Isaac was about to have given the blessing that belonged to the first born, to Esau ; Jacob, by his mother's advice, obtained it by a stratagem ; and Isaac, tho' he had been surprized, after he had found it out, confirmed it, understanding it to be the order of God. Jacob inherited the piety and devotion of Abraham and Isaac, and is joined with them as a special favourite of heaven, by God himself ; when he

stiles

files himself, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. He was also favoured by a vision, in which he saw a ladder, (Gen. xxviii.) standing upon the earth, and the top of it reaching to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending by it, and the Lord himself leaning upon the top of it; and confirming to him and his seed all the promises he had made to Abraham. He also gave him the name of Israel, and made him the father of twelve sons; from whom, the twelve tribes of Israel are derived. These were, Ruben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zabulon, Dan, Nephthali, Gad, Aser, Joseph and Benjamin. Ruben forfeited his privilege of first-born, which entitled him to a double portion, and to be the priest and prince of his brethren, by defiling his father's bed; so the double portion was given to Joseph, from whom descended two tribes, Ephraim and Manasses: the priesthood was given to Levi, and the sceptre to Judah: according to the blessing given him by his father at his death, Gen. xlix. *The sceptre shall not be taken away from Judah, — till he come that is to be sent (Shilo the Messias) and he shall be the expectation of nations.*

9. Of the Patriarch Joseph.

Joseph, for his virtue, was the favourite of heaven; amongst all the sons of Jacob, and was endowed with the spirit of prophecy; he

was

was also his father's favourite, and therefore was hated and envied by his brethren; who, having found an opportunity, sold him to some merchants who carried him into Egypt, and persuaded their father that a wild beast had devoured him. The merchants sold him to Putiphar a principal officer to the king, who conceived a great affection for him, and gave him the charge over all his house, till his mistress, who had often solicited him to sin, which the chaste young man would by no means consent to, maliciously accused him to her husband of having made an attempt upon her chastity. Upon this, Joseph was cast into prison, where he shewed his prophetick spirit in the interpretation of the dreams of two of the king's servants; and after two years he was called out of prison by *Pharao* the king: and upon his interpreting that prince's dreams, foreboding the seven years of plenty, and the seven years of famine that were to come upon the earth; and the wise counsel he gave the king on that occasion, he was promoted by him, and made governour over all Egypt. His brothers, forced by the famine, came to Egypt to buy corn, which was sold out under his direction. He knew them, tho' they knew him not; for he spoke to them by an interpreter, and he charged them with being spies, and treated them harshly, which occasioned them to say to one another, "we deserve to suffer these things, because we have sinned against our brother, seeing the anguish of his soul, when he be-

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" sought

“ fought us and we would not hear, therefore is
 “ this affliction come upon us :” not knowing that
 he understood them, much less that he was the
 person. Joseph hearing this, turned away for a
 little while and wept ; then sent them home
 with a charge, that at their return they should
 bring their youngest brother with them : and or-
 dering his steward to fill their sacks with corn,
 and to put every man’s money in his sack. At
 their second coming, after keeping them some
 time in suspense, he made himself known to
 them with many tears, in the most moving man-
 ner graciously excusing all they had done against
 him, and embracing and weeping over every
 one of them. After which, he sent for his fa-
 ther Jacob with all his family into Egypt, and
 gave them there the land of Gessen. And thus
 the children of Israel became inhabitants of
 Egypt, where they sojourned above two hun-
 dred years.

10. *The History of Holy Job.*

This holy man is believed to have lived dur-
 ing the time that the Israelites were in Egypt.
 His dwelling was in the land of Hus, which is
 a part of Edom, or bordering upon it. He was
 rich in worldly substance, but more so in grace
 and virtue, having this character from the Spirit
 of God ; that he was a *simple*, that is a sincere
 innocent, and upright man, fearing God and de-
 parting from all evil. God was pleased for his
 trial

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trial to permit satan to strip him of all his sub-
 stance at once, to cause all his flocks and herds
 to be driven away or destroyed; and to raise a
 storm of wind, which blew down the house
 where all his children were at dinner, and killed
 them all. Messenger after messenger brought to
 Job the news of all these his losses; who upon
 the hearing of them, *fell down upon the ground*
and worshipped God, and said: naked came I out
of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return to
my mother earth: the Lord gave, and the Lord
hath taken away: as it hath pleased the Lord, so it
is done, blessed be the name of the Lord. After
 this, for Job's farther trial, satan was permitted
 to strike him with a most grievous ulcer, from
 the sole of the foot even to the top of the head,
 accompanied with a dreadful complication of
 diseases and pains; all which he bore with an
 admirable patience, saying, *if we have received*
good things at the hand of God, why should we not
receive evil? His three friends hearing of all the
 evil that had befallen him, came to visit him;
 but instead of comforting, only afflicted him the
 more, imputing all his sufferings to the crimes
 they falsely laid to his charge; and pretending
 that God never afflicts the innocent. Job on
 his part maintained his own innocence as to all
 those pretended crimes, and appealed to the
 judgment of God. The Lord was pleased at
 length to pass sentence in his favour, by a voice
 from above; and to order his three friends to
 take seven oxen and seven rams, and "go said
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“ he, to my servant Job, and offer for your-
 “ selves a holocaust, and my servant Job shall
 “ pray for you: his face will I accept, that
 “ your folly be not imputed to you: for you
 “ have not spoken right things before me, as my
 “ servant Job hath.” In the conclusion the Lord
 was pleased to bless the latter end of Job more
 than his beginning, by multiplying his substance
 and giving him a long and happy life.

Chap. II. *From Exodus and the other
 Books of Moses.*

I. *Of the oppression of the Israelites in
 Egypt, and of the birth of Moses.*

AFTER the death of Jacob and his sons,
 the children of Israel were multiplied ex-
 ceedingly, till there arose a king in Egypt, who
 had not known Joseph; who fearing they would
 grow too powerful, oppressed them with hard
 labour, and a most cruel slavery. But the more
 they were oppressed the more they increased and
 were multiplied; wherefore the king charged
 his people that they should destroy all the male
 children that should be born of Israel and cast
 them into the river. During this time, Moses
 was born of the tribe of Levi, and being a
 lovely child was hid by his mother three months,
 till seeing she could hide him no longer, she took
 a basket made of bullrushes, and daubed it with
 slime

slime and pitch, and put the little babe in it, and laid him in the sedges by the brink of the river; his sister standing at a distance to see what would be done: when behold the king's daughter coming with her maids, and walking by the river side, saw the basket in the sedges, and sent one of her maids for it; and seeing in it an infant crying, having compassion on it, she said, this is one of the babes of the Hebrews. The child's sister asked her if she pleased she should go and call to her a Hebrew woman to nurse the babe. The princess bid her go; so she went and called her mother: and the king's daughter said to her, take and nurse this child for me and I will give thee thy wages. So Moses was nursed by his own mother; who when he was grown up, delivered him to the princess, who adopted him for her son; and had him trained up in the learning and wisdom of the Egyptians. Going forth after this amongst his brethren, and seeing their great oppression, he undertook their defence; which the king hearing of, sought to kill him: but he fled from his sight into the land of Madian, and was there entertained by Jethro the priest, whose daughter he married, and had two sons of her. In the mean time, the king of Egypt his persecutor, dies; but the cruel oppression of the people of God ceased not, and their cry went up to the Lord from their hard labours and slavery, and he was pleased to have pity on them.

2. God sends Moses to deliver Israel: he reveals his name to him.

Now Moses fed the sheep of his father-in-law, and he drove his flock into the inner parts of the desert, and came to mount Horeb, alias Sinai. Here the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush; and he saw that the bush was on fire and was not burnt. And as he was going up to see the meaning of this wonder, the Lord called to him out of the midst of the bush, not to come near, but to put off the shoes from his feet, for the ground was holy: and he said I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, &c. I have seen the affliction of my people in Egypt, and I have heard their cry, because of the rigour of them that are over the works, and I am come down to deliver them, and to bring them into a land that floweth with milk and honey.—And I will send thee to Pharaoh the king, that thou mayest bring forth my people out of Egypt. Moses, thro' the mean opinion he had of himself, and his defect in his speech, would have excused himself; but the Lord insisted upon his going, gave him the power of working miracles, and appointed him his brother Aaron, who was an eloquent man, to go with him to the king. On this occasion God also revealed his name to Moses. “Lo I shall go, said Moses, to the “ children of Israel, and say to them, the God

“ of

“ of your fathers hath sent me to you. If they
 “ shall say to me, what is his name? what shall
 “ I say to them? I AM WHO AM, (that is,
 “ I am BEING itself, the being of all beings,
 “ all things else are nothing) Thus shalt thou
 “ say: HE WHO IS hath sent me to you, THE
 “ LORD, (that is the eternal, self-existent, infi-
 “ nite master and creator of all things) the God
 “ of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the
 “ God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob hath
 “ sent me to you: this is my name for ever,
 “ and this is my memorial unto all genera-
 “ tions.”

3. *Pharao refuses to let the people go:
 the plagues of Egypt.*

Moses and Aaron, being thus sent with a
 commission from heaven, went unto king Pha-
 rao: but he despised the Lord, and instead of
 letting the people go, as they had requested, to sa-
 crifice to their God in the wilderness, he took oc-
 casion from hence to oppress them the more. To
 punish his obstinacy and the wilful hardness of
 his heart, the Lord afflicted him and his people
 with *the ten plagues of Egypt*: under which he
 often promised to let the people go; but when
 the plague was over he performed nothing. The
 first of these plagues, was the turning of all the
waters of Egypt into blood. The second were
the frogs, who coming out of the river in an
 immense multitude, covered all the land, filled
 the

the king's palace, and all the houses, chambers, and beds of the Egyptians, and spoiled all their meats. The third were the *ciniphs*, a small flying insect, produced from the dust, and infinitely troublesome both to men and beasts. The fourth was an infinity of *flies* of all kinds, which terribly incommoded both Pharaoh and his people. The fifth was a grievous *murrain*, or pestilence amongst the cattle. The sixth were ulcers or *boils*, and swelling blains upon men and beasts. The seventh was a frightful storm of *hail*, immensely large, with thunders, and lightnings, and fire, which drove on together mixt with the hail, and destroyed all it met with. The eighth plague were the *locusts*, which devoured every green thing that remained after the hail. The ninth was *darkness* for three days, caused by exhalations so gross that they might be felt with the hand; so that nothing could be seen at all, nor could any one move himself out of his place, only where the children of Israel were (who were free from all these plagues) there was clear light. The tenth and last plague was the death of all the first born of Egypt, both of men and cattle, in one night. As a preparation for this, the Lord ordered, that on the fourteenth day of the first month, every family of the children of Israel should sacrifice a lamb in the evening, and should sprinkle their door with the blood of it; and should eat the flesh of it that night roasted at the fire, with unleavened bread and wild lettuces; with their loins

girt up, and their slaves in their hands, in the posture of travellers, setting out on their journey to the land of promise. When behold at midnight the Lord slew all the first born of Egypt, from the son of Pharaoh to the son of the meanest slave, and of their cattle too: the angel only passed by those houses which were mark'd with the blood of the lamb. Now all this was mysterious, alluding to the true lamb of God, by the sprinkling of whose blood, and the eating of whose flesh, our souls are to be delivered from the destroying angel, and we are to be brought home to our true country. With this last plague, Pharaoh and his people were so terrified that they presently sent away the Israelites, and even pressed them to be gone, lending them their best things they had for their journey. The remembrance of this deliverance out of the bondage of Egypt was ordered to be kept up, by the institution of the feast of the *pasch* or *passover*, on which they yearly repeated the sacrifice and supper of the lamb; as a figure of the christian sacrifice and sacrament of the lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.

4. *The Israelites pass thro' the Red Sea: Pharaoh and his Army are drowned. Exodus xiv.*

The people of God, to the number of six hundred thousand men, went forward on their journey

journey till they came to the Red Sea, which divides Egypt from Arabia ; the angel of God going before them to shew them the way, by day in a pillar of a cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire : which favour was continued to them all the time till they came to the land of promise. And now Pharaο repenting that he had let them go, assembled all his chariots and horsemen and his whole army to pursue them, and found them encamped at the sea side. The people seeing the Egyptian army, gave themselves up for lost; but Moses encouraged them, and the angel with the pillar of the cloud, removing from before went behind them, and hindered the Egyptians from being able to come up with them. And when Moses had stretched forth his hand over the sea, God made the waters to depart, so that the children of Israel went in through the divided sea on dry ground, the waters standing up as a wall on their right-hand and on their left. Pharaο with all his host pursuing, went in after them through the midst of the sea : and now the morning watch being come, the Lord from the pillar of the cloud, with which he protected Israel, began to slay the Egyptians, and overthrew the wheels of their chariots, and they were carried into the deep. They finding this, turned their backs and fled : but Moses stretching forth his hand over the sea, the waters returned upon them and overwhelmed their whole army, not a man of them escaped. But the children of Israel continued their march till they came to the

opposite

opposite shore, the waters standing up as a wall on both sides of them : and they saw the carcases of the Egyptians cast up on the shore, and the mighty hand that the Lord had used against them, and they glorified their great deliverer. This passage of the Red Sea, was a figure of baptism.

5. *The Journey to Mount Sinai.*

The people journeying from the Red Sea for three days, could find no water : and the waters of Mara, which they met with on the fourth day, were so bitter they could not be drank. But Moses cried to the Lord, and he shewed him a tree, which when he cast into the waters they became sweet. After this they came into the desert of Sin, and here all the people murmured, regretting their having left the flesh pots of Egypt, and the bread of which they had plenty there. On this occasion, the Lord sent amongst them an immense flight of quails; and instead of bread, shower'd down upon them in the morning the manna of heaven, a most delicious food; which he continued to give them for forty years, till he brought them into the land of promise. This manna was a figure of that bread of life, which Christ has ordained for our support in our pilgrimage thro' the desert of this world, till he brings us to our true country. The next mansion of the people was in Raphidim; and here they murmured for want of water,

ter, which by miracle was given them out of a rock: this rock was a figure of Christ, and of the waters of life which stream from him. Here also Amalec came and fought against Israel: but Moses by lifting up his hands to heaven in prayer obtained the victory. And the Lord declared an eternal war against Amalec, for persecuting his people so lately delivered from the Egyptian slavery. The next mansion of the people was in the desert of Sina, over-against the mountain: and here they were ordered to purify themselves for the receiving the law of God. And on the third day, (which was the fiftieth from their coming away from Egypt) thunders began to be heard, and lightnings to flash, and the sound as it were of a trumpet to be perceived exceeding loud; and a thick smoke arose from the mount as from a furnace, and all the mount was very terrible, for the Lord had come down upon it in a burning fire: and from the midst of the fire he delivered with a loud voice, (heard distinctly by all the people below, at the foot of the mountain) the ten commandments as follows.

6. *An Abstract of the Ten Commandments*
from Exodus xx, and Deutonomy v

“ And the Lord spoke all these words: I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt not have strange Gods before my face. Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven image.

" thing: [an idol or image God] nor the like-
 " ness of any thing that is in heaven above, or
 " in the earth beneath, or in the waters under
 " the earth. Thou shalt not adore them nor
 " serve them. Thou shalt not take the name
 " of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord
 " will not hold him guiltless, that shall take his
 " name in vain. Remember that thou keep
 " holy the sabbath day. Six days shalt thou
 " labour, and shalt do all thy works. But on
 " the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord
 " thy God; thou shalt do no work on it, thou,
 " thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man ser-
 " vant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy beast,
 " nor the stranger that is within thy gates. Ho-
 " nour thy father and thy mother, that thou
 " mayst live a long time, and it may be well
 " with thee in the land which the Lord thy
 " God will give thee. Thou shalt not kill.
 " Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou
 " shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false
 " witness against thy neighbour. Thou shalt
 " not covet thy neighbour's wife: nor [shalt
 " thou covet] his house, nor his field, &c. nor
 " any thing that is his. These words the Lord
 " spoke to all the multitude out of the midst of
 " the fire, and of the cloud and of the darkness,
 " and he wrote them in two tables of stone,
 " which he delivered to Moses." But the peo-
 " ple being exceedingly terrified, stood afar off,
 " saying to Moses, speak thou to us and we will
 " hear: let not the Lord speak to us lest we die.
 C So

So Moses alone went into the dark cloud where the Lord was, and conversed with him for forty days : and partly at this time, and partly after the erecting the *tabernacle of the testimony*, (the plan of which God gave him in the mountain) he received from the Lord all the other precepts of the law, as well such as related to the morals of the people, the deciding of their causes and punishing offences, as those that related to the sacraments, and sacrifices to be offered, festivals to be observed, and ceremonies to be used in the worship of God : all which had a mystical meaning with relation to Christ and his church.

7. *The People fall into Idolatry : Their Punishment.*

The people seeing that Moses staid a long time in the mount, gathering together against Aaron, said to him, Arise, make us gods that may go before us : for as to this Moses who brought us out of Egypt, we know not what has befallen him. Bring me then, said Aaron, the golden ear-rings of your wives and children : they brought them to him ; and with these by founders work, he made a molten calf. And they said, *these are thy gods, O Israel, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt.* And they offered sacrifices to the idol, and they sat down to eat and drink, and then rose up to play. Upon this the Lord bid Moses go down from the mountain, telling him that the people had committed

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mitted a deadly sin: and he would even then have destroyed them, and Aaron with them, if Moses by his prayers had not interposed. The man of God went down carrying the two tables of the law in his hands: "and when he came near and saw the calf and the dances, being very angry, he threw the tables out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mount. And laying hold of the calf they had made, he burnt it and beat it to powder, and strewed it into the water of the torrent which came down from the mountain." Then after chiding his brother Aaron, he stood in the gate of the camp and cried out: If any man be on the Lord's side let him join with me: and all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him; and by commission from the Lord, executed his justice on three and twenty thousand of the idolaters. The next day, after remonstrating to the people the heinousness of their sin (on which account, they were ordered to lay aside their ornaments, and to mourn) Moses returned to the Lord to implore his mercy and forgiveness; and he spent other forty days with the Lord in the mount, in fasting and divine conversation, and was admitted to the sight of him, as much as could be granted to a mortal man. Here also he again received the commandments written by the Lord on two tables as before; and he came down with them from the mountain, his face shining and as it were *horned* with beams

beams of light, from the conversation of the Lord; to the great astonishment of all that saw him.

8. *Of the Ark of the Covenant, and of the Tabernacle.*

The two tables of the law, were, by divine appointment, deposited in an *ark* or chest, made for the purpose of incorruptible wood, covered with plates of gold both within and without; and over the ark was placed the *mercy seat*, with two golden cherubims, standing one on each side of the ark, and forming with their wings as it were a seat for his divine majesty, from which he was pleased to give his oracles. For the keeping of this ark and mercy seat, and for other services of the divine worship, the Lord commanded a *tabernacle* to be made in the nature of a portable temple, being a magnificent tent or pavilion; in the inner part, which was called the *Holy of holies*, the ark and mercy seat were placed, where none but the high priest could go in. Before the holy of holies there hung down a *veil* or curtain beautifully embroidered. And without the veil, in the other part of the tabernacle, stood the little altar, which was laid over with gold for burning of perfumes; the golden candlestick with its seven branches, and the table for the twelve loaves which were always set before the Lord; which table was also plated with gold. Before the en

trance of the tabernacle was placed the altar of sacrifices, which were to be offered according to the law, by Aaron and his sons, whom the Lord called to the priesthood, and who were solemnly consecrated to that purpose: for whom also, the Lord ordered their priestly vestments, and in particular, most costly ornaments for the high priest, the plate of gold under his mitre engraved with the name of the Lord, his robe, and over that his curious garment called the *Ephod*, with its rich girdle, and little breast plate with its four rows of precious stones, engraved with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, in which was the Urim and Thummim, or doctrine and truth, for giving divine answers and oracles. The rest of the tribe of Levi were also dedicated to the service of the tabernacle, but in an inferior degree, the priestly functions being reserved for the family of Aaron. The tabernacle being set up, and consecrated and anointed by Moses, God was pleased to fill it with his majesty. Then Aaron being ordained with his sons, and offering sacrifice for himself and the people, a fire coming from the Lord, consumed the victim in the sight of the people. Upon this occasion, Nadab and Abihu, the two eldest sons of Aaron, presuming to offer incense with unhallowed fire, were immediately destroyed by a fire from the Lord.

9. Of

9. *Of the Infidelities of the People, and their Seditions in the Wilderness.*

This ark and tabernacle were removed from place to place, accompanying the people thro' all the mansions in the desert, as a token of God's favour and presence with them, and of his covenant with them; and yet they still continued to be a stiff-neck'd and rebellious people. Their first march from mount Sina lasted for three days, the ark of the Lord going before them and the cloud of the Lord overshadowing them. And here there arose a murmuring of the people against the Lord, repining at the fatigue of their journey: and the fire of the Lord being kindled against them; devoured them that were at the uttermost part of the camp; till Moses prayed to God and the fire was swallowed up. Here also a mixt multitude that were come up out of Egypt, burned with a desire after flesh, sitting and weeping, the children of Israel also being joined with them influenced by their bad example, and saying, who shall give us flesh to eat, we remember the cucumbers and the melons, and the onions we eat in Egypt; our soul is dry, our eyes behold nothing else but manna: and the wrath of the Lord was enkindled against them, because they regretted their coming out of Egypt, and preferred the flesh pots and onions before the food he gave them from heaven. However, he promised to

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give them flesh to eat, which should serve them for a whole month till they perfectly loathed it: and he brought over from beyond the seas by a strong wind, a prodigious multitude of quails, and cast them into their camp, and all round about it for the space of one day's journey; of which they killed such a quantity, and dried them, as sufficed to feed them for four weeks. But then for their punishment, he sent a great pestilence amongst them, and numbers of them died and were buried in that place, which thenceforward was called the *graves of lust*, for that irregular desire after the Egyptian food, for which they were punished with death. And now they were drawing near to the land of Canaan, which the Lord had promised to give them in possession; when Moses sent twelve spies, one of every tribe, principal men, to view the whole country, and bring back an account of it. These at their return, brought some of the fruits of the land, in token of its fertility; but then they so terrified the people by aggravating to them the strength of the cities, and the giantlike size of the inhabitants, that there arose a universal murmur, which Caleb and Joshua, two of the number, sought in vain to quell; for the multitude would even have stoned them, and were for appointing themselves a leader, and returning into Egypt. When Moses and Aaron heard this, they fell down flat upon the ground before the multitude, and the glory of the Lord appeared over the tabernacle of the covenant to all

all the people. And the Lord said to Moses: how long will this people not believe me, after all the signs I have wrought before them; I will strike them therefore with pestilence and consume them. But Moses prayed most earnestly to the Lord to forgive them, and he was pleased graciously to hear his prayer; yet so as to exclude by an irreversible decree, all the murmurers from ever entering the promised land, and to sentence them all to die in the desert; and as for the authors of the sedition they were struck dead upon the spot: but the rest going out the next day to fight, against the will of God, were defeated by the Canaanites.

10. *Of the Schism of Korah, Dathan, and Abiron.*

Korah a Levite, Dathan and Abiron of the tribe of Ruben, with two hundred and fifty others, all leading men of the synagogue, rose up against Moses and Aaron, opposing their authority and claiming to themselves a share in the priesthood. Which when Moses heard, he fell flat on the ground, dreading the consequences of this sacrilegious attempt. Then speaking to Korah and all the multitude, he said: in the morning the Lord will make known who belong to him; and whom he shall choose, they shall approach to him. Take every one of you censers, with fire in them, and put incense upon the fire before the Lord, and whomsoever

He shall choose, he shall be holy. He also sent
 for Dathan and Abiron, but they refused to come
 or pay any regard to his message, and sent him a
 contumelious answer. On the next day, Korah,
 with all his company, with their censers in their
 hands, standing on the one side, and Aaron
 with his censer on the other; when they had
 drawn up all the multitude against Moses and
 Aaron to the door of the tabernacle, the glory
 of the Lord appeared to them all. And the
 Lord said to Moses and Aaron: separate your-
 selves from among this congregation, that I may
 presently destroy them. And he said to Moses:
 command the people to depart from the tents of
 Korah, Dathan, and Abiron; which when he
 had done, behold the earth opening under their
 feet, swallowed them down alive; and at the
 same time a fire coming out from the Lord,
 destroyed the two hundred and fifty that offered
 the incense; and on the following day, fourteen
 thousand, seven hundred others, who raised a
 sedition against Moses and Aaron, imputing to
 them the death of all that had perished. After
 this, the Lord was pleased to confirm the priest-
 hood to Aaron, by the miracle of the blooming
 of his rod; which also he ordered to be kept for
 a monument in the tabernacle.

II. Other

II. *Other Murmurings of the People:
Their Victories over Sehon and Og.*

And now the people were come to Cades on the confines of the land of Edom, where they wanted water for themselves and their cattle; and on this occasion making a sedition, they murmured against Moses and Aaron, for bringing them out of Egypt into those wretched deserts; and demanded water in a tumultuous manner: Moses and Aaron betook themselves to the tabernacle, and there falling flat on the ground, begged of the Lord to open his stores and give to the people a fountain of water. He ordered them to take the rod, and to assemble the people, and to speak to the rock before them, and that it should give them water. They assembled the multitude before the rock, and Moses struck it twice with his rod, and there came forth water in great abundance for the people and for their cattle. But on account of some diffidence or weakness of faith of Moses and Aaron on this occasion, the Lord told them that they should not be permitted to bring the people into the land which he was about to give them. From Cades they marched to mount Hor, where Aaron died, and his son Eleazar was made high priest in his stead. Here they defeated king Arad the Canaanite, and destroyed his cities. In their march from Hor in compassing the land of Edom, the people wearied with their journey

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and labour, murmured again against God and Moses: and the Lord for their punishment sent among them *fiery serpents*, (so called from the burning heat caused by their bite) which killed many of them. Upon which, confessing their sin, they begg'd for mercy. And Moses, by order of the Lord, made a *brazen serpent*, which he set up for a sign, which when they that were bitten looked upon they were healed. This serpent lifted up in the wilderness was a figure of Christ crucified, and of the efficacy of a lively faith in his passion against the bites of the heli-
sh serpents.

After this, the people marching on came to the torrent Arnon, the rapid streams of which were miraculously dried up for their passage. Then they sent to Sehon king of the Amorites, for leave to pass thro' his territories which lay between them and the river Jordan; but he refused it, and came out with all his people to fight against Israel, who slew him with all his army, and took possession of all his cities. And they turned themselves and went up by the way of Basan: and Og the king of Basan came against them with all his people; and the Lord delivered him also into their hands, with all his dominions. Thus Israel possessed themselves of the fertile countries of Basan and Galaad; and gave them to the tribes of Ruben and Gad, and half the tribe of Manasses.

12. *Balaam*

12. *Balaam is sent for to curse Israel:
His wicked Counsel, and the Consequences
of it.*

These victories of Israel alarmed Balac, the king of the Moabites, who in conjunction with the princes of Madian, sent a solemn embassy to Balaam, whom they esteemed a great prophet and favourite of heaven, to invite him to come and lay his curse upon Israel. In his journey, the Angel guardian of Israel stood in his way, with a drawn sword, and suffered not his ass to pass by: he even opened the mouth of the dumb beast to rebuke the prophet, and then shewed himself to him, saying: I am come to withstand thee because thy way is perverse and contrary to me. Balaam worshipped him falling flat on the ground, and offered to return home again: but the angel bid him go on but to speak no other thing than what he should command him. Balaam, thro' the desire he had of gratifying Balac, three times attempted to curse Israel; but all the times, he was obliged by the Spirit of God, to bless them, and to prophecy good things of them: he even foretold the coming of Christ, whom he calls the *Messiah that should arise out of Jacob*. Yet after uttering all these good things, he gave to Balac and the Madianites, a most detestable counsel, which was, to send their beautiful women into the camp of Israel, who might allure the people

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lust, and draw them over to the worship of their Gods, and by that means strip them of the grace and protection of the Lord. This diabolical counsel was put in practise, and a multitude of the people were by this means debauched from the Lord: for which infidelity, four and twenty thousand of them were slain. And by the commandment of the Lord, an army was sent against the Madianites who had debauched them; which without the loss of a man, slew all their princes and people; and with them Balaam their wicked counsellor.

13. *The last Acts of Moses: his Death and Burial.*

The time of the death of Moses being now at hand, he caused all the people to be numbered, from twenty years old and upwards, by their tribes: and they were found to be six hundred and one thousand, seven hundred and thirty: amongst whom there was not one of those who had been numbered before in the desert of Sinai, except Caleb and Joshua: for the Lord had foretold, that they should all die in the wilderness. He then delivered to the people all the precepts and exhortations contained in the book of Deuteronomy, which he wrote at this time: representing to them all the divine benefits to them and their fathers; and inculcating particularly that they should love the Lord their God with their whole heart, and keep all his com-

mandments ; that they should flee from idolatry, and all the other abominations of the Canaanites, and have no manner of society with them : that they should be always humble, and never attribute their victories or good success to any merits of their own, but to God's free love and goodness, and the covenant he had made with their fathers ; for that they had always been a stiff neck'd and rebellious people, &c. With these exhortations he joined a promise of great blessings to them, if they kept God's law ; and threats of most dreadful punishments if they transgressed. He also told them, that God would raise up for them in his good time another great prophet, a law giver like himself, meaning Jesus Christ, whom all must hear and obey who would be saved. He then assembled all the people, and solemnly renewed the covenant between them and the Lord : and taught them a canticle, which was to be to them a constant remembrancer of the law of God. Then after giving his blessing to all their tribes, he went up, as God had commanded, to the top of mount Nebo, from whence the Lord shewed him all the promised land : and there he gave up his spirit into the hands of God ; being one hundred and twenty years old. The Lord buried him by the ministry of angels ; and would have the place of his burial to be unknown, lest the Israelites, who were prone to idolatry, should pay divine honour to his sepulchre.

C H A P. III.

From the Books of Joshua and Judges.

1. The miraculous Passage over the River Jordan.

JOSHUA by divine appointment succeeded Moses, and being encouraged by the Lord, admonished the people to prepare themselves to pass over the river Jordan; in the mean time he sent two spies to the strong city of Jericho, who were harboured and concealed by *Rahab*; in reward of which good work a covenant was made, to save all that should be found in her house at the taking of the city. After their return, the people removed their camp; and following at a distance the priests that carried the ark of the Lord, came up to the river, which at that time was swelled and had filled its banks. When behold, no sooner had the priests who carried the ark dipped their feet in the water, but the channel was dried up; the waters that were coming down being stopped, so as to swell up like a mountain and to be seen afar off; and the waters that were beneath running away into the dead sea or lake of Sodom. And thus all Israel marched thro' the dry channel over against Jericho. And for a monument of this miracle, they set up twelve stones in the midst of the channel, and carried other twelve stones out of the channel, and set them up in Galgal; where they encamped.

camped that night. Now when Joshua was in the field of Jericho, which was close shut up for fear of the children of Israel, he saw there a man standing over against him holding a drawn sword, and he went to him and said: Art thou one of ours, or of our adversaries? and he answered, *no; but I am prince of the host of the Lord* [St. Michael] and now I am come. Joshua fell on his face to the ground, and worshipping, said: what saith my Lord to his servant? Loose, saith he, the shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy.

2. *The taking of Jericho and Hai.*

For the taking of Jericho, the Lord ordered that they should make a procession round it for seven days, the priests carrying the ark and sounding the trumpets: and that on the seventh day the people should all give a great shout: which when they had done, the walls forthwith fell down, and every man went up by the place that was over against him, and they took and destroyed the city; only sparing them that were found in the house of Rahab: but the spoils in gold and silver were consecrated unto the treasury of the Lord. Joshua also by the Spirit of God laid a curse upon the man that should ever rebuild the walls of this city. In a mystical sense, Jericho signifies *iniquity*: the walls of which are thrown down by the trumpets of the gospel: and a dreadful woe shall fall on them by whom they are built up again.

After the taking of Jericho, three thousand men were sent against the city of Hai; but they were defeated in punishment of the sacrilege of Achan, who had stolen some part of the spoils of Jericho, which had been devoted to the Lord. This defeat put all Israel in consternation: and Joshua, with all the ancients, prostrating himself before the ark implored the divine mercy, when the Lord said to him, chap. vii. 20, &c. "Arise, why liest thou flat on the ground? Israel hath sinned and transgressed against my covenant: and they have taken of the anathema [devoted to me] and have stolen and lied, &c. neither can Israel stand before his enemies—because he is defiled with the anathema. I will be no more with you; till you destroy him that is guilty of this wickedness. Arise, sanctify the people, and say to them, the curse is in the midst of thee O Israel—you shall come in the morning by your tribes and families; and whosoever shall be found by lot to be the man that has done this wicked thing, shall be burnt with fire, with all his substance." Accordingly in the morning, all Israel being brought by their tribes, the lot fell upon the tribe of Juda; and amongst the families of Judah, upon that of Zabdi, in this family it fell upon Achan, the son of Charmi: who being thus detected, acknowledged his guilt, and was stoned to death, and all his substance was consumed by fire. From this passage, Christians may learn, what

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a dreadful evil it is to have the curse of wilful sin in the midst of their souls : and that they must not expect that any thing should go well with them, till this enormous evil is removed ; because God will not be with them. After this the people went up against Hai, and with ease took it and destroyed it.

3. *The Children of Israel are deceived by the Gabaonites : A miraculous victory over five kings : Joshua commands the Sun to stand still.*

And now the kings of Canaan hearing what Joshua had done to Jericho and Hai, all with one accord, gathered themselves together, to fight against Israel. Only the Gabaonites sending an embassy, as they pretended, from a country afar off, to the Israelites, induced them to make a league with them : deceiving them, because they had not first consulted the Lord. However, when the deceit was discovered, they would not kill them, because of their oath : but they sentenced them to be for ever in the service of the people, and to hew wood, and to carry water for the uses of the altar and the tabernacle. But Adonisedec king of Jerusalem, hearing that the Gabaonites were gone over to Israel, joining his forces with the kings of Hebron and of Jerimoth, and of Lachis and of Eglon, went and laid siege to Gabaon : of which the besieged

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gave notice to Joshua; who being encouraged by the Lord, set out from his camp at Galgal, and marching all the night came upon them suddenly. And the Lord troubled them at the sight of Israel, and he made a great slaughter of them. And as they were fleeing by the descent of Bethoron, the Lord cast down upon them great stones from heaven, as far as Azeca: and many more were killed by the hailstones, than were slain by the swords of the Israelites. Then Joshua, full of faith and confidence, spoke in the hearing of the people, to the Lord, and said:

“ Move not O sun towards Gabaon; nor thou O moon towards the valley of Aialon: and the sun and moon stood still till the people revenged themselves of their enemies.—So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down for the space of one day. There was not before nor after so long a day, the Lord obeying the voice of a man, and fighting for Israel.

The five kings in their flight, betook themselves to a cave near Maceda; where they were discovered, and brought out to the people, who put their feet upon their necks; after which they were ordered to be slain and hung up upon gibbets. And all the army of Israel returned from the pursuit of their enemies safe and sound, without the loss of a man.

4. *Other Victories of Joshua: His last Acts and Death.*

After this miraculous victory, Joshua besieged and took Maceda and Lebna, and Lachis and Eglon, and Hebron and Dabir, all royal cities; and subdued the whole country that lay to the south of Gabaon; and then was called forth to fight against Jabin king of Asor, who had assembled all the kings of the north, with all their forces, an army exceeding numerous, like the sand that lies on the sea-shore; with a very great multitude of horses and chariots, to fight against Israel. But Joshua came and fell upon them on a sudden; and the Lord delivered them into his hands, and he slew them all; so as to leave no remains. After this he took Asor, and all their other strong holds, and subdued the whole country. And then divided it by lot to the children of Israel. And now the tabernacle of the covenant was set up in *Silo*, a city of the tribe of Ephraim: and here the sanctuary of the Lord and the one only altar allowed by the law to the people of God, remained till the time that the ark was taken by the Philistines.

After this, Joshua, drawing near the end of his mortal pilgrimage, called for all Israel; and exhorted them to the love and service of the Lord; warning them in particular to avoid marriages and all other society with the Gentiles; for fear of being corrupted by them: promising

them all good if they kept God's commandments, and threatening them with speedy destruction if they should transgress and revolt from the Lord. He made also a solemn covenant to this effect, between the people and God : and recorded it in the volume of the law. And after these things, he concluded a holy life with a happy death, being one hundred and ten years old.

5. *The History of the Judges.*

The people of Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and of the ancients that had seen all his wonderful works. But this generation being dead and gone, they quickly fell away from the worship of God to the worship of idols ; and in punishment of their apostacy, were delivered up into the hands of their enemies, and were enslaved and grievously oppressed by them. Upon their repentance, the Lord, in his mercy, rescued them out of their hands, by the means of some extraordinary persons whom he raised up for them : but generally speaking, they relapsed again. These extraordinary persons were for their time the rulers and judges of Israel.

Othniel, Abod, and Samgar.

The Israelites being for their sins delivered to the hands of the king of Mesopotamia, were

were violently oppressed by him for eight years ; and they cried to the Lord, who raised them up a saviour to deliver them, viz. Othniel the nephew of Caleb : and the Spirit of the Lord was in him, and he overthrew their enemies, and gave them rest for forty years.

They returned again to their evil ways ; and then were oppressed for eighteen years by the Moabites : but upon their crying to the Lord for mercy, he delivered them by the means of Ahod, who slew the king of Moab ; and the land rested eighty years.

After Ahod came Samgar the son of Anath, who also defended Israel ; and slew of the Philistines six hundred men with a plow-share.

Debbora and Barac.

The people relapsed again into idolatry ; and were delivered up into the hands of Jabin king of Canaan, and Sisara his general, who had nine hundred chariots set with hooks and scythes, and he tyrannized over them for twenty years. At that time Debbora the prophetess judged Israel ; who being divinely inspired, sent for Barac the Nephthalite ; giving him a commission from the Lord, to assemble ten thousand men of the tribes of Nephthali and Zabulon ; and assuring him that the Lord should deliver Sisara and all his army, and his chariots into their hands. Which happened accordingly : for the Lord struck such a terror into Sisara and all his army

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army at the fight of Barac, that they all fled away with the utmost confusion ; and Sisara, jumping out of his chariot, sought to save himself in the pavillion of Jabel the wife of Heber the Cinite : but here laying himself down to sleep, he met with death from her hands. And as to his army they were all destroyed. Thus an end was put to the tyranny of Jabin ; and the land rested forty years.

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But the Israelites again did evil in the fight of God ; and he delivered them into the hands of the Madianites ; who most grievously oppressed them for seven years : till upon their crying to the Lord, he called forth the humble Gedeon, to save them out of their hands. But lest Israel should glory in their own strength, as if they had obtained the victory over their enemies by the multitude of an army ; when the Lord sent Gedeon to fight against an army of one hundred and thirty five thousand, he only allowed him to take with him three hundred men, and those he only furnished with trumpets, and earthen pitchers, and burning lamps. These entering into the camp of the Madianites at midnight, in three different parts, sounding their trumpets and breaking their pitchers one against another, and holding forth their lamps, cried out, *the sword of the Lord and of Gedeon.* With which the Lord led their whole camp with such terror and confusion,

confusion, that crying out and howling, they all began to flee, and even killed one another. In their flight, the Israelites from all sides coming upon them, made such a slaughter of them, that no fewer than one hundred and twenty thousand were slain that day, and amongst them their four chiefs Oreb and Zeb, and Zebbee and Salmana. After this victory, the people would have made Gedeon their king: but he humbly declined it; saying, that neither he nor his son should rule over them; but the Lord should rule over them. He judged Israel in peace forty years, and died in a good old age. But after his death the people returned again to the worship of Baal.

Abimelek.

Abimelek one of the sons of Gedeon, with the help of the Sichimites usurped the government after the death of his father, and having hired to himself an armed multitude, murdered all his brothers excepting Joatham the youngest, and was made king by the men of Sichem, at that time a capital city in Israel. But his power was short lived: for the Lord quickly sent a very evil spirit between him and the Sichimites which ended in their mutual ruin, according to the prayer and prediction of Joatham. For the Sichimites taking up arms against Abimelek were defeated by him, and their city and strong tower were destroyed with all the inhabitants.

And Abimelek besieging the tower of Thebes, and coming near the gate to set fire to it, was killed by a woman casting a piece of a millstone from above upon his head. He judged Israel three years. Thola who succeeded him was judge for three and twenty years; and his successor Jair for two and twenty.

Jephth.

And now the children of Israel adding new sins to their old ones, were delivered into the hands of the Ammonites, and of the Philistines. And when they cried to the Lord, he said to them: "Go and call upon the gods which you have chosen: let them deliver you in the time of your distress." And the children of Israel said to the Lord: "We have sinned; do thou to us whatsoever it pleaseth thee: only deliver us this time." And saying these things they cast out of their coasts all their idols, and served the Lord their God: and he was touched with their miseries. O infinite mercy! And now the men of Galaad (the country beyond the Jordan) who were most oppressed by the Ammonites, chose the valiant Jephth for their ruler and captain: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him; and assembling all his people, he made a vow to the Lord, that if he would grant him victory, he would offer up in sacrifice the first that should meet him, when he returned to his house. God gave him the victory, by which

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he entirely delivered Israel from the power of the Ammonites. When behold the first person who meets him returning home, to his great grief, was his only child, a maiden daughter: however he looked upon himself obliged to fulfil his vow; to which the virgin also consented, only desiring a reprieve of two months. Though some are of opinion that this sacrifice of Jephthé's daughter, was no other than a consecration of her virginity to the Lord. Because the immolating of human victims was always condemned by the law of God. Jephthé judged Israel four years: and after him Abesán judged them seven years: his successor Ahialon ten years, and after him Abdon eight years. But the people falling again into idolatry, were made a prey to the Philistines, and served them forty years.

Samson.

At this time Samson was born, and was a Nazarite of God, that is one consecrated to God from his infancy. He was endowed with an extraordinary strength: and the Spirit of the Lord wrought wonders by him. He tore a lion in pieces who came to assault him; and being only a single man, he slew great numbers of the Philistines at different times. One time when he had entered into Gaza, one of their cities and they had set guards at the gate, thinking that now they had him secure: he rose at midnight, and taking both the folding doors of the

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gate, together with the posts and the boit, and
laying them upon his shoulders, carried them
up to the top of the hill which looketh towards
Hebron. After this he fell in love with a wo-
man named Dalila ; who was bribed by the lords
of the Philistines to betray him into their hands.
Which she at length effected, when having by
her importunity extorted from him, that his
strength was a miraculous gift of God, foras-
much as he was a Nazarite consecrated to God ;
and that if his head were shaved he should for-
feit both his consecration and his strength ; she
sent for a barber, and caused his head to be
shaved ; and then called in the Philistines, who
rized upon him and forthwith put out his eyes,
and led him bound in chains to Gaza, and there
putting him up in prison, made him grind.
And now his hair began to grow again, when
the princes of the Philistines, with their people,
making a great feast in honour of their god Da-
gon, called for Samson to come and play before
them, in the presence of about three thousand
spectators. And they placed him between the
two pillars that supported the house. When he
calling upon the Lord to restore him his strength,
did hold on one of the pillars with his right
hand, and on the other with his left, and shook
them so strongly, that the whole house came
down, and fell upon the heads of all the princes,
and of the rest of the multitude. And Samson
himself was also killed with them. He judged
Israel twenty years.

The History of Ruth also happened in the time of the Judges. She was a Gentile by birth; but married to an Israelite a sojourner in the land of Moab; and after the death of her husband, resolutely adhering to her mother-in-law *Noemi*, and returning with her to Bethlehem, was happily brought to the true religion, and associated to the communion of the people of God. Here she married Booz, to whom she bore Obed the grandfather of David: from whom is descended according to the flesh our Lord Jesus Christ, who is God above all blessed for evermore.

C H A P. IV.

From the Books of Samuel.

*The History of the People of God, under
Heli, Samuel, Saul and David.*

Heli.

AFTER Samson, Heli the high priest was the judge of Israel forty years. He resided in Silo, where the temple of the Lord was at that time: and being old, committed the functions of the priesthood to his two sons Ophni and Phinees; who were wicked, and gave great scandal to the people. In those days Samuel was born, obtained by the prayers of his mother Anna, who dedicated him by vow to the service of the Lord in his temple, and presented him to

the high priest when he was as yet a child. Here he ministered to the Lord before Heli : and here the Lord was pleased to reveal himself to him. Samuel slept in the temple, where the ark of God was kept : and one night the Lord called him. He went presently to Heli, thinking it was he that called him : and this was repeated a second and a third time : till Heli understanding it was the Lord that called the child, bid him, if he was called any more, to say : *Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.* He did so : and the Lord was pleased to reveal to him the evils that should fall upon the house of Heli, because of the iniquity of his sons, whom he had not properly chastised. In the morning, Heli insisting upon knowing what the Lord had said ; Samuel told him all : and he humbly submitted to the sentence of his punishment, saying : *It is the Lord : let him do what is good in his sight.* From this time the Lord often revealed himself to Samuel : and all Israel came to know that he was a prophet of the Lord.

In those days the Israelites being worsted in an engagement with the Philistines, sent to Silo for the ark of the Lord to be brought into their camp for their protection ; and the two sons of Heli came with it. The people received the ark with a great shout of joy : but God was not pleased to allow them his protection. They were beaten again by the Philistines with the loss of thirty thousand men, Ophni and Phinees were both slain, and the ark of God was taken, to

the great grief and desolation of all Israel : and Heli upon hearing the news, falls back from his seat and dies, being ninety-eight years old.

The Philistines carried away the ark, and set it up in the temple of their idol Dagon, which fell down twice before the ark of the Lord. They removed it from city to city, and where-soever it came they were grievously plagued ; till after seven months, they sent it away to Bethsames, a city of Israel : where the people too curiously looking into it, were struck with a pestilence which carried off fifty thousand. From Bethsames the ark was removed to Cariathiarim : where it remained till the days of king David.

Samuel.

After the death of Heli, Samuel judged Israel : and happy were the people under his direction. He brought all the house of Israel to follow the Lord, and serve him alone. And having gathered them together to Masphath, where they all joined in the confession of their sins, and in fasting and prayer ; he there obtained for them a glorious victory over the Philistines, who came up to fight against them. “ For he took a suck-
“ ling lamb, and offered it whole for a burnt-
“ offering to the Lord ; and he cried to the
“ Lord for Israel, and the Lord heard him ;
“ and he thundered upon the Philistines with a
“ great thunder and terrified them, and they

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" were overthrown, and the men of Israel
 " made a great slaughter of them. And the
 " Philistines were humbled ; and the hand of
 " the Lord was against them all the days of Sa-
 " muel." And now the Prophet growing old,
 and his sons whom he had made judges not
 walking in his footsteps, the people insisted upon
 his giving them a king to judge them, as all
 other nations had their kings. And the Lord
 was pleased to make choice of Saul to be the
 man. He was sent out by his father to seek
 some asses that were lost, and not finding them
 he was directed to consult Samuel ; to whom
 the Lord the day before had revealed his coming,
 and that it was he that should rule Israel. Sa-
 muel entertained him, that day and the next
 morning, privately anointed him king ; in con-
 sequence of which unction, God presently gave
 him a new heart, and the Spirit of the Lord
 came upon him. After this, Samuel called the
 people together to Maspha, and proposed to
 them the choice of a king by lots : and here
 the lot fell upon Saul. He had hid himself at
 some, but was discovered by the oracle of the
 Lord : and when he was brought amongst the
 people, he was found to be taller than any of
 them by the head and shoulders : and they all
 stood out, *God save the king.*

Saul

Saul.

Saul was very good in the beginning of his reign, and as long as he continued so, the Lord was with him, and all things prospered. God gave him many signal victories over the enemies of his people: and in particular, a most miraculous one over the Philistines, who had brought out against him thirty thousand chariots, and an immense multitude, with which the Israelites were so dismayed, that they slipt away; and there remained no more than six hundred of them with the king. On this occasion, the brave Jonathan, Saul's eldest son, full of confidence in the Lord, accompanied with his armour-bearer, climbing up the rocks, ventured to assault an advanced party of the Philistines, and defeated them. Upon which a trembling, as a miracle from God, seized the Philistine army; and their uproar was heard in Saul's camp. And his watchmen perceived a multitude overthrown, and fleeing this way and that. Then Saul and his men shouting together, came to the place of the fight; and behold, every man's sword was turned against his neighbour, and there was a very great slaughter. And thus the Lord saved Israel that day.

After this and many other victories over the people of God, Saul was sent by the Lord to destroy the Amalekites, who had been the most inveterate enemies of Israel, even from the first

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first coming out of Egypt, with an express order
 not to covet or bring away their cattle, or any
 thing else of theirs, but to demolish all. Here
 he unhappily transgressed, by sparing their king,
 and bringing away all the best of their cattle :
 and for this disobedience he was cast off by God.
 Suffer me, said Samuel to him, (1 Samuel,
 chap. xv. ver. 16, &c.) and I will tell thee
 what the Lord hath said to me this night.
 And he said to him, Speak. And Samuel
 said, When thou wast a little one in thy
 own eyes, wast thou not made the head of
 the tribes of Israel ? And the Lord anointed
 thee to be king over Israel, and sent thee
 to go and destroy Amalec : why then didst
 thou not hearken to the voice of the Lord ;
 but hast turned to the prey, and hast done
 evil in the eyes of the Lord ? And Saul said,
 The people took of the spoils, sheep and
 oxen, to offer sacrifice to the Lord their God.
 And Samuel said, doth the Lord desire holo-
 causts and victims, and not rather that the
 voice of the Lord should be obeyed ? For
 obedience is better than sacrifices, &c. Be-
 cause it is like the sin of witchcraft to rebel ;
 and like the crime of idolatry, to refuse to
 obey. Forasmuch therefore as thou hast re-
 jected the word of the Lord, the Lord hath
 also rejected thee, &c. Neither will he be
 moved to repentance ; for he is not a man
 that he should repent." This reprobation of
 Saul, once the elect of God, was a figure of the
 reprobation

reprobation of the Jews, once the chosen people of God, for their refusing to receive and obey their Messiah, Jesus Christ the Son of God.

And now Samuel is sent to Bethlehem to anoint a king among the sons of Isai or Jesse. And here, after the rejecting of all the others, David the youngest is sent for from keeping the sheep, and is anointed king by the commandment of the Lord. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul; and an evil Spirit from the Lord troubled him. On this occasion, David, who was a skilful player on the harp, was taken into Saul's family; and by his harp and devotion, chased away the evil spirit. A war breaking out with the Philistines, Saul took to the field, and David returned home. In this war, Goliath, the champion of the Philistines, a man of a gigantic size, challenged all Israel to furnish a man to fight with him hand to hand. David, who was come to see his brothers, hearing this challenge, and judging that the honour of the Lord was at stake, offered himself to Saul to go and fight against the Philistine: and when Saul said to him, Thou art not able to withstand him; for thou art but a boy, and he is a warrior from his youth: he assured the king, that he had already slain a lion and a bear, and made no doubt, but, with the help of the Lord, he should in like manner overcome this Infidel. He went forth therefore against the Philistine with no other weapons but a

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sling and five stones ; but armed with an entire confidence in the Lord. “ Thou comest to me, “ said he to Goliath (who despised him) with a “ sword, and with a spear, and with a shield ; “ but I come to thee in the name of the Lord “ of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel “ which thou hast defied this day : and the “ Lord will deliver thee into my hand, and I “ will slay thee, and take away thy head from “ thee ; and I will give the carcases of the army “ of the Philistines this day to the birds and to “ the beasts, that all the earth may know there “ is a God in Israel, &c.” In this confidence, as the Philistine was coming up against him, he put a stone into his sling, and fetching it about, he struck him in the forehead, and he fell on his face to the earth. And as David had no sword, he ran up, and standing over the Philistine, drew his sword out of the sheath and cut off his head : which the Philistines seeing, immediately fled away ; and Israel pursuing after them, made a great slaughter of them.

After this victory, Jonathan entered into a covenant of the closest friendship with David ; for he loved him as his own soul. But Saul began to be jealous of him, and to envy him ; in much, that he made many attempts on his life, which the divine providence still protected ; and he even massacred Achimelech the high priest, and eighty-five other priests, and destroyed their city only for having relieved David. Nor did this unhappy prince cease to persecute him, till he

he obliged him to seek refuge in the land of the Philistines: though David more than once had his life in his power; but would not suffer his men to hurt a hair of his head.

In the conclusion, Saul going out to war against the Philistines, finding himself forsaken by God, seeks by magick to call up Samuel, who was dead some time before, in order to consult him. God permits Samuel to appear, who denounces to Saul his approaching death. *To-morrow*, said he, *thou and thy sons shall be with me*. The battle of Gelboe ensued, where Israel was overthrown, and Saul, with three of his sons, were slain.

David.

David lamented grievously this unhappy death of his enemy no less than that of his dear friend Jonathan: and by divine admonition, going to Hebron, the capital city of Judah, was made king over the tribe of Judah; where he reigned seven years, whilst Ishboeth, the son of Saul, reigned over the other tribes. At the end of seven years, Ishboeth was murdered by two of his servants, who brought his head to David, by whose orders these murderers were immediately put to death. And now all the tribes of Israel agreed to make David their king: upon which he left Hebron; and having taken Jerusalem out of the hands of the Jebusites, together with the castle of Sion, which he built up

made his residence, he made it his first care to bring away the ark of the Lord from Cariathiarim, with great joy and devotion, that he might have it near himself. On this occasion, Oza being struck dead for touching the ark, David, through fear, deposited it for a while in the house of Obededom. But from thence, after three months, having assembled the priests and Levites, he translated it with a most solemn procession, with seven choirs or companies of musicians, and many sacrifices, he himself playing on his harp and dancing with all his might before the Lord; and brought it into the tabernacle, or pavillion, which he had prepared for it, in the precincts of his own palace on mount Sion. And here this religious prince, whose greatest passion, from his youth, was to love and glorify the Lord, and to sing his praises, appointed Levites and priests to minister continually before the Lord, and to give glory to his name, as well with their voices as with their trumpets and other musical instruments; of whom the chief were Asaph, and Heman, and Idithun, whose names so often occur in the titles of the Psalms; which David composed, on this occasion, to be sung before the Lord, himself attending and assisting in the performance. His zeal for the divine glory suggested also to him a desire of building a magnificent temple for the worship of the Lord: which, though he was not permitted to execute, his goodwill was rewarded with the promise of great blessings in his seed; partly relating

lating to his son Solomon, who was to build the material temple in Jerusalem; but much more to Christ, the great Son of David, and the builder of the true temple of God, which is the Church, his everlasting kingdom, which shall never fail, nor be cast off for any iniquity of her children.

David had now reigned happily for many years, and had been blessed with success in all his wars against the enemies of God's people: when, Oh! the dreadful frailty of mortals! he was drawn into the grievous sin of adultery, by casually seeing a woman washing herself: which ought to be a caution to all men to keep a guard upon their eyes; and to all women, not to expose any part of their naked bodies to the eyes of men. But see how one sin is quickly followed by another. This prince not finding any other means to conceal the crime, causeth his husband Urias, who was then at the siege of Rabba, the capital city of the Ammonites, to be placed where the greatest danger was, so that he was slain there. After which, David married the widow, who bears him a son. And here the prophet Nathan is sent from the Lord to remonstrate to him the heinousness of his crimes, and his ingratitude after so many favours received, and to denounce to him his punishment. And though, by his sincere repentance and confession of his guilt, he escaped the sentence of eternal death that stood out against him, and the Lord was pleased to take away his sin as to the guilt

yet those dreadful temporal punishments, which the prophet had denounced, were all inflicted upon him.

And now he began to be very unhappy in his own family. His eldest son Amnon ravishes his sister Thamar; and in revenge for it, is killed by his brother Absalom. Absalom flees to Geshur, where he remains three years, till by the interest of Joab the general, he obtains his pardon: after which, he insinuates himself so far into the favour of the people, and alienates their minds from his father, as to make himself to be proclaimed king in his place, and to oblige king David to leave Jerusalem, and to save his life by fleeing beyond the Jordan. After which, by the wicked counsel of Achitophel, (who soon hanged himself) he defiled his father's wives in the sight of all the people. And then passing the Jordan with his army, was defeated by David's servants in the forest of Ephraim, with the loss of twenty thousand of his men. In his flight, as the mule on which he sat went under a thick and large oak, his head was engaged and stuck in the tree; and the beast passing on, left him hanging there, till Joab hearing it, came up with three lances and thrust them into his heart. His good father, who would gladly have had his life saved, grievously lamented his death (dying in this manner in confession of his sins) to that degree, that he wished he himself could have died for him.

After this, a new rebellion was raised by one Absalom, a man of mount Ephraim, who passing

through the tribes of Israel as far as Nephthali, was followed by great numbers ; till being pursued by Joab, and closely besieged in the city of Abela, the citizens, by the counsel of a wise woman, cut off the rebel's head, and threw it down the wall ; and so the war was ended.

The penitent king, under all his afflictions, gave a great example of an humble resignation to the holy will of God, of a great sense of his sins, to which he justly imputed all his scourges, and a truly penitential spirit, together with a most perfect charity for those that persecuted him. Yet, after some years, he again incurred the offence of God by a sin of vanity, in causing the people to be numbered. Of this fault also he bitterly repented ; and when in punishment of it, seventy thousand of his people were carried off in three days by the pestilence ; and he saw the Angel of the Lord with his hand stretched out over Jerusalem, to strike it : he cried out with a truly contrite and humble heart : *It is I, I am he that have sinned ; I have done wickedly : these that are the sheep, what have they done ? Lay thy hand, I beseech thee, be turned against me, &c.* And the Lord, who is quickly moved to mercy by the supplication of a soul thus really humble and penitent, was pleased immediately to put stop to the plague.

The last acts of David, after he had appointed his son Solomon to be his successor, are recorded in the latter part of the first book of Chronicles particularly his charge to his son, with regard to

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the building of the temple, and the whole plan of it, which he had received from God; the immense sum he had prepared for the expences of it; and the divisions of the Levites, the priests, and the musicians, into their courses and several offices, which he appointed for the perpetually carrying on the worship and praise of the Lord in his house. Where also is found an excellent speech and exhortation made by this most religious prince, in a solemn assembly, to his people; his joy to see how willingly and heartily they all made their offerings to the Lord; and his thanksgiving and prayer on this occasion, full of extraordinary sentiments of devotion and religion, worthy of the *man according to God's own heart*. In these sentiments and dispositions he happily ended his days in a good old age, after having reigned in all forty years.

CH A P. V.

From the Books of Kings and Chronicles.

*The History of Solomon and his Successors
the Kings of Israel and Judah.*

Solomon.

IN the beginning of his reign he visited the tabernacle of the Lord, which at that time was at Gabaon, and there offered a solemn sa-

crifice of a thousand victims. In consequence of this, the Lord appeared to him in a dream by night, and offered him his choice of what he would have to be given him. He chose the gift of wisdom preferably to all other things; and the Lord applauded his choice, and both gave him the wisdom which he asked, and moreover riches and glory, and the other good things of this world, which he had not asked. The chief transaction of his reign was the building of a most magnificent temple for the Lord, which he finished in seven years; and then made a most solemn dedication of it, with innumerable sacrifices, joined with thanksgiving and prayer. On this occasion a fire came down from heaven in the sight of all the people, and consumed the holocausts and victims; and the majesty of the Lord filled the temple; and all the people saw the glory of the Lord upon the house; and falling down with their faces to the ground, they adored and praised the Lord: *because he is good, because his mercy endureth for ever.* 2 Chron. vii. After this dedication, the Lord appeared again to Solomon in a dream, signifying to him, that he had heard the prayer he had made with relation to the temple, and assuring him of his favour, if he continued to serve him faithfully; but threatening to cast him off, if he turned to the service of strange gods. All which, notwithstanding this prince's passion for women, brought him in his latter years to idolatry. He married a great number of heathen wives, and

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was passionately fond of them: to please these he built temples for their gods, and even joined with them in their worship. Thus fell this great man; and fell in such a manner as to have left it uncertain whether he ever rose again. This fall was punished by the division of the kingdom, and giving away ten of the twelve tribes from his family to Jeroboam, the son of Nabat, according to the prediction of Ahias the prophet.

Jeroboam and his Successors.

After the death of Solomon, his son Roboam, by following young giddy counsellors, alienated the minds of ten of the twelve tribes of Israel. These chose Jeroboam for their king; and he, through a wicked policy, to keep them from the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, (which was in the dominions of Roboam) brought in the worship of two golden calves, which he set up in Bethel and in Dan. Thus he *made Israel to sin*; which is so often repeated in the sacred scriptures, whensoever his name is mentioned, in abhorrence of the infamous memory of that man, who drew away the people of God from their allegiance to the Lord: thus he set a most wretched example to the kings his successors, which was followed by them all, till both they and their calves were destroyed out of the land. How dreadful is the evil of scandalous example, more especially in men of dignity.

Jeroboam

Jeroboam was offering incense to his golden calf upon his altar in Bethel, when a prophet was sent to him from Judah, who foretold the birth of Josias by name, (not born till three hundred and fifty years after) and what he should do with that altar, and the bones of its priests, &c. upon which, when Jeroboam stretched out his hand, ordering the prophet to be apprehended, his hand immediately withered, and the altar was rent. He begged of the prophet to pray for him, and by his prayer his hand was restored. Yet this unhappy prince departed not from his wicked ways. No, not even after the prophet Ahias, who had foretold his being king, denounced to him from the Lord the dreadful evils that were about to fall upon his house, for his wickedness, in making to himself *strange gods* and *molten gods*, and casting the Lord behind his back. In punishment of which, after two and twenty years reign, he was struck by the Lord and died in his sins.

His son and successor Nadab did not long survive him: but after two years reign, walking in all the ways of his father, he was slain by Baasa who made himself king, and immediately exterminated every soul of the family of Jeroboam, as the prophet Ahias had foretold. Baasa walked in the footsteps of his predecessors, and in all their sins; and the like judgments as had fallen upon them were denounced to his family also by Jehu the prophet, the son of Hanani. He put the prophet to death; but could not avert the judgment

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judgments of God; which were soon after executed; when his son and successor Ela was murdered by Zambri, and all his kinsfolks and friends extirpated. Zambri, as wicked as his predecessors, being besieged by Amri in the royal city of Thersa, and finding himself like to fall into his hands, after seven days tyranny, set the palace on fire, and perished in the flames.

Amri walked in all the ways of Jeroboam: he built up the city of Samaria, and made it his residence; and dying after twelve years reign, left the kingdom to his son Achab. This prince marrying Jezabel, the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Phenicians, brought in the worship of Baal, the idol of the Phenicians, and became the very worst of all the kings of Israel; destroying the altars of the Lord, by the suggestion of his wife, and killing the prophets. At which time, Obadiah, the king's steward, an eminent servant of God, concealed in caves, and fed with bread and water, no fewer than one hundred of those holy men.

The History of Elias the Prophet.

In the days of king Achab, the Lord raised the prophet Elias, who made a brave stand, for the Church of the living God, against the worship of Baal. By his prayer he shut up the heavens from giving any rain for three years; so that there was a dreadful famine in all the land: in which time he was first sent to the brook Carith;

Carith ; where he was miraculously fed by ravens,
 till the waters of the brook were dried up, and
 then he was sent to Saraphta, a city of the Si-
 donians, to a poor widow, whose small quantity
 of meal, which would scarce have sufficed to
 have nourished her for one day, was by a mira-
 cle made to support both him and her family,
 without ever diminishing, till the time that the
 Lord sent rain upon the earth. In the mean
 time, the widow's son died, whom the prophet
 raised to life again. And now the time being
 come when the Lord would give rain, he sent
 Elias to meet Achab ; and all Israel being assem-
 bled to mount Carmel, together with all the
 prophets of Baal, Elias coming, said to the peo-
 ple : " How long do you halt between two ? If
 " the Lord be God, follow him : but if Baal,
 " then follow him. Then he said, I only re-
 " main a prophet of the Lord ; but the pro-
 " phets of Baal are four hundred and fifty men.
 " Let two bullocks be given us, and let them
 " choose one, and lay it upon wood, but put
 " no fire under ; and I will dress the other and
 " lay it upon wood, and put no fire under it.
 " Call ye on the names of your gods, and I will
 " call on the name of my Lord : and the God
 " that shall answer by fire, let him be God.
 " And all the people answering, said : A very
 " good proposal." Upon which, when the pro-
 phets of Baal had dressed their bullock, and
 called in vain upon Baal from morning till noon
 leaping over their altar, and cutting themselves

with

with knives and lancets : Elias, in his turn, repairing the altar of the Lord that was broken down, and laying the wood, and the bullock upon it, addressed his prayer to the Lord, when immediately fire came down from heaven and consumed both the holocaust and the wood, and the very stones of the altar : which all the people seeing fell on their faces, and cried out, *The Lord he is God, the Lord he is God.* After which, the prophet obtained by his prayers a most plentiful rain.

And now the impious Jezabel being bent upon taking away his life, Elias flees into the desert, where he is fed with bread by an angel : and in the strength of that food (as a figure of the bread of life, which we receive in the blessed sacrament) he *walks forty days and forty nights unto the mount of God, Horeb* ; and there is favoured with an extraordinary vision and revelation from God. After this, he was sent to denounce to Achab the heavy judgments of God that should fall upon him and his wife Jezabel, for the unjust murder of Naboth, who had refused him his vineyard ; in particular, that in the place where the dogs had licked the blood of Naboth, they should lick his blood also ; that his whole family should be extirpated like that of Jeroboam ; and that Jezabel should be eaten by dogs. Achab being terrified with this prediction, humbled himself in fasting and putting on haircloth, and by this means obtained a reprieve for a time. Not long after, being deluded by his false prophets,

prophets, and slighting the prediction of Micah the prophet of the Lord; he went out to fight against the Syrians in Ramoth Galaad, and was slain in his chariot: which was brought home and washed in the pool of Samaria, the dogs licking up his blood.

His son Ochozias succeeds him in the kingdom; and walking in all his ways, is quickly overtaken by divine justice. In his illness, he sends to consult Beelzebub, the god of Accaron. Upon which, Elias declares to him from the Lord, that because he had sent to consult Beelzebub, as though there was not a God in Israel of whom he might enquire the word: therefore he should never come down from his bed, but should surely die. His brother Joram succeeds him in the kingdom.

And now the time was come that the Lord would take away Elias; who sought, on this occasion, to discharge his disciple Eliseus: but he absolutely refused to part with him. They went therefore together to the Jordan; where Elias by striking the waters with his cloak, divided the river, so that they both passed through a dry land. When they were gone over, Elias asked Eliseus, what he would have him do for him, before he was taken away from him. Eliseus begged that he might inherit his double portion. Thou hast asked a hard thing, said Elias; but if thou seest me when I am taken away, I shall be granted thee. "And as they went walking and talking together, behold a fire

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“chariot and firey horses parted them both asunder, and Elias went up by a whirlwind into heaven.” And Eliseus saw him go; and he took up the mantle which had fallen from him, and returning to the Jordan, divided the waters with it, calling upon the God of Elias. Upon which the sons of the prophets, (a set of religious men, of whom there is frequent mention in the books of Kings) came up and paid him a religious veneration.

Eliseus the Prophet.

Eliseus, or Elifha, being now replenished with a double portion of the spirit of his master Elias, shone forth in an extraordinary manner by his miracles and prophecies. He healed the waters of Jericho by casting salt into them; and the boys of Bethel (the chief seat of the calf-worship) were torn by bears for mocking of him. The kings of Israel, of Judah, and of Edom, warring against Moab, and being in great distress for want of water, the prophet miraculously procured it for them, and that without any cloud or rain; and moreover, promised them victory. After this, being entertained by a lady of Sunam, he obtained of God a son for her; and when his son, after some time, died, he restored him to life again. He healed Naaman, the general of the army of the king of Syria, of an inveterate leprosy, and made a convert of him to the true faith and worship; yet would not receive any

any of the presents he offered him : but Giezi, the prophet's servant, by a lye, having obtained two talents of Naaman's money, was presently after struck with his disease. In a war between Israel and the Syrians, the man of God, by prophetick light, more than once warned the king of Israel of the ambushes designed for him by the Syrians. Upon this, the king of Syria sent an armed power to apprehend the prophet in Dothan. The servant of the man of God seeing the city encompassed with an army, with horses and chariots, was greatly terrified ; but the prophet bid him not fear, assuring him they had a greater army for them than that which came against them. In proof of which, he prayed to the Lord to open the servant's eyes ; and he saw ; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Eliseus, to protect him. At the prophet's prayer, the Lord struck the Syrians with an extraordinary kind of blindness ; so that they neither knew him nor the place where they were. And Eliseus said to them : *Follow me, and I will shew you the man whom you seek.* So he led them into Samaria ; where, when their eyes were opened, they found themselves surrounded with a greater power. Yet the prophet would not suffer any violence to be offered to them, but ordered a great provision of meats to be set before them, and then sent them away to their master.

After this, the Syrians laid siege to Samaria, and reduced the city to such streights by famine

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that mothers were brought to eat their own children: when Elifeus, who was there in the city, told the king and his attendants, by way of prophecy, "To-morrow, about this time, a bushel of fine flour shall be sold for a stater, (2s. 6d. English) and two bushels of barley for a stater, in the gates of Samaria. Then one of the lords, upon whose hand the king leaned, answering the man of God, said, If the Lord should make floodgates in heaven, can that possibly be which thou sayest? And he said, Thou shalt see it with thy eyes, but shalt not eat thereof." This prediction was verified by the Lord's causing that night a noise to be heard in the Syrian camp, as of a very great army coming upon them; and striking them with such a panick, as to make them flee away, and to leave all their provisions, and all things else, behind them: upon which, presently ensued the plenty foretold by the prophet: but the incredulous nobleman being appointed by the king to stand at the gate, lost his life, being trodden under foot by the press of the people.

And now the time was come when the Lord would execute his judgments upon the house of Achab and upon Jezabel, and revenge the blood of his prophets, whom they had slain. Joram, son of Achab, having reigned twelve years, being wounded by the Syrians at Ramoth Galaad, was obliged to go back to Jezrahel, to be cured of his wounds, and was visited there by Ocho-

zias, king of Judah. In the mean time, Eliseus, by divine commission, sent one of his disciples to Ramoth, where the army remained, with instructions to anoint Jehu, one of the commanding officers, to be king over Israel. Which was no sooner known by the other captains of the army, but they proclaimed him king, by sound of trumpet, and he immediately set off for Jezrahel. Here Joram and Ochozias going out to meet him, in their chariots, were both slain by him: and the body of Joram was cast into the field of Naboth. Then as he entered into the gate of the city, Jezabel, who had painted herself, standing at the window, cried out, Can there be peace for Zambri, who has killed his master? At which, Jehu spoke to two or three eunuchs who were there, to throw her down headlong: which they presently executed; so that the wall was sprinkled with her blood, and the hoofs of the horses trod upon her. After which, when Jehu had dined, he said to his people, Go and see after that cursed woman and bury her, because she is a king's daughter. And when they went, they found nothing of her but the skull and the feet, and the extremities of the hands, the rest being devoured by the dogs.

Jehu, and the Kings his Successors.

Jehu having now got quiet possession of the kingdom, extirpated the whole family of Achaz his seventy sons, and all his kindred, with

his friends and all his priests, to a man, according to the prediction of Elias. Then having, by a stratagem, brought together all the worshippers of Baal to his temple in Samaria, he sent his soldiers in amongst them, and killed them all, and demolished both the idol and the temple, and so put an end to the worship of Baal in Israel. By these means he obtained a promise of the Lord, that his children should sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation. Yet neither he nor they lived up to the law of the Lord, but adhered to the idolatrous worship of the calves of Jeroboam. And for their punishment, Israel was most dreadfully ravaged by Hazael king of Syria, according to the prediction of Eliseus the prophet.

Jehu reigned eight and twenty years; then dying, had for his successor his son Joachaz. In his time, Israel was brought so low for their sins, that this king had no more left of them than fifty horsemen and ten thousand foot; the rest were all slain by the king of Syria. In this great distress Joachaz called upon the Lord, and he was pleased to hear him, and to deliver Israel from total ruin. Yet he left not the calves of Jeroboam.

Joachaz reigned seventeen years, and had for his successor his son Joas, who walked in the same footsteps. He visited the prophet Eliseus upon his death-bed, and received from him an assurance that he should be victorious over the Syrians in three different battles. The prophet

died soon after, and was buried : and a dead man's corpse, which was cast into his sepulchre, had no sooner touched the bones of Eliseus, but the man came to life again, and stood upon his feet.

Joas reigned sixteen years, and had for his successor his son Jeroboam the second, who followed the same ways as his fathers had done. He reigned one and forty years ; and in his time restored Israel to its ancient bounds, recovering all that had been lost, according to the word of the Lord, which he spoke by his servant Jonas the prophet.

This was that same Jonas the prophet, who was sent by the Lord to preach to the great city of Ninive, the capital of the Assyrian empire. But dreading the commission, he sought to flee away by sea to the coast of Tharsis. But it was vain to attempt to flee from the face of the Lord, who overtook the ship he was in with a most violent storm, which ceased not, till Jonas, who confessed himself to be the cause of it, was cast into the sea. Here the Lord had prepared a monstrous fish, by which he was swallowed up, and he was kept alive in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. In the mean time he called earnestly upon the Lord ; at which command the fish vomited him out upon the shore. And now being sent again, he goes to Ninive, and preaches through the great streets crying out, *Yet forty days and Ninive shall be destroyed.* This preaching had a wonderful effect

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 the men of Ninive believed in God, they proclaimed a general fast, they turned from their wicked ways, and both king and people, from the-highest to the lowest, cried to the Lord for mercy, and he was pleased to shew them mercy. Jonas was the only prophet who was sent to the Gentiles; and he was an illustrious figure of the resurrection of Christ our Lord.

After the death of Jeroboam the second, his son *Zacharias* reigned six months, and then was slain by *Sellum*; who, after one month's reign, was deprived both of his life and kingdom by *Manakem*. This king reigned ten years, and had for his successor his son *Phaceia*; who, after two years reign, was killed by *Phacee* the son of *Romelia*. *Phacee* reigned twenty years, and then was deposed and slain by *Osee* the son of *Ela*, the last of the kings of Israel. All these princes did evil in the sight of the Lord; and for their sins, and the sins of their people, the Lord delivered Israel into the hands of the kings of Assyria; who carried them away into captivity, and placed other inhabitants in Samaria in their stead. These new comers introduced a strange mixture of religion there, worshipping the God of Israel, and their own pagan deities at the same time.

The Succession of the Kings of Judah.

I. Roboam, the son of Solomon, after the division of the kingdom, reigned prosperously for

for the first three years, whilst he followed the Lord; and he was greatly strengthened by all the Levites, and all the rest that feared the God of Israel coming over to him. But afterwards, forsaking the divine law, he was invaded by Sefac king of Egypt, who stript him of all his dominions, and of all his treasures. Upon this occasion, "the prophet Semeias came to Ro-
 "boam and to the princes of Judah, from the Lord, and said to them: You have left me," saith the Lord, and I have left you in the hand of Sefac: and the princes and the king, being in a consternation, said, *the Lord is just*. And when the Lord saw they were humbled, the word of the Lord came to Semeias, saying, Because they are humbled I will not destroy them by the hand of Sefac. But yet they shall serve him, that they may know the difference between my service and the service of an earthly kingdom. So Sefac departed from Jerusalem, taking away the treasures of the house of the Lord, &c." And the wrath of the Lord was turned away from his people because they were humbled. Nevertheless, Rehoboam did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord sincerely. He reigned seventeen years, and he died for his successor his son Abia.

2. Abia reigned only three years, and his heart was not perfect with the Lord. However, in his war against Jeroboam, his faith and confidence in the Lord was rewarded with a glorious

glorious victory over Jeroboam's army of eight hundred thousand men.

3. Aſa, the ſon of Abia, extirpated idolatry out of his dominions; and the Lord rewarded his zeal and piety with a prosperous reign. With confidence in God he went out to fight againſt Zarah the Ethiopian, who brought againſt him a million of men; and the Lord terrified the Ethiopians, and they fled before the army of Aſa, and were utterly deſtroyed.

4. Aſa reigned one and forty years, and had for his ſucceſſor his ſon Joſaphat, a godly prince, who was greatly favoured by the Lord, and reigned proſperouſly five and twenty years. He was a true father of his people, taking to heart not only their temporal, but much more their ſpiritual welfare; and for this end, ſending forth teachers, Levites, and prieſts, through all his dominions, for the inſtruction of his ſubjects in the law of the Lord; appointing every where proper judges, and even viſiting them himſelf, and ſparing no pains to bring his people back to the Lord, the God of their fathers. In his time the Ammonites, Moabites, and Syrians, came againſt him with an infinite multitude: he prepared himſelf and his people for the war, by earneſtly ſeeking God's help with publick prayer and faſting; and was aſſured by a prophet, that the Lord would grant them victory without their fighting; as he did, the following day: when their enemies, turning their ſwords againſt one another,

another, destroyed one another, and left their spoils to be gathered by Josaphat and his people.

5. Joram, the eldest son of Josaphat, succeeded in the kingdom, and was a most wicked prince. He murdered all his brothers, and brought in the worship of Baal, being married to Athalia, a daughter of Achab. His reign was short and unhappy, and his death most miserable.

6. Ochozias, the son of Joram, walking in his footsteps, in the space of one year, was overtaken by divine justice, and slain by Jehu. After his death, his wicked mother Athalia usurped the kingdom, killing all the children of the royal family, excepting Joas, the little son of Ochozias, whom his aunt stole out of the nursery and hid from her. Athalia maintained her usurpation six years; and in the seventh, Joas being proclaimed king by the captains of the guard, by the counsel of Joiada the high priest, the usurper was slain, and the worship of Baal was abolished.

7. Joas reigned well whilst he was under the direction of the holy priest Joiada. But after his death, being deluded by the flatteries of his courtiers, he forsook the Lord; and caused Zacharias, the son of Joiada, (who threatened him and his people with the wrath of God) to be stoned to death, in the court of the temple. But this wickedness was not long unpunished: within a year the Syrians came upon him, killing all his courtiers and flatterers, and with a ha-

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of men defeated an infinite multitude; the Lord delivering them up because they had forsaken him. On Joas also himself they executed shameful judgments: and departing, left him in great diseases; and his servants rose up against him, and slew him in his bed. He reigned, in all, forty years.

8. Amasias, the son of Joas, was good in the beginning of his reign: but having vanquished the Edomites, and brought away their idols, he set them up and worshipped them. And being apprehended by a prophet on that occasion, and threatened with the judgments of God, he would not hearken to him. Wherefore he was soon after overthrown and taken prisoner by Joas king of Israel, and at length slain by his own people. He reigned fifteen years.

9. Ozias, alias Azarias, son and successor of Amasias, reigned two and fifty years; and was prosperous under the conduct of Zacharias the high priest, who taught him to seek the Lord: and as long as he sought the Lord, the Lord directed him in all things, and made his reign happy. But being elevated with prosperity, he attempted to go in to offer incense in the sanctuary of the temple, which was a function that belonged to the priests alone: upon which, he was immediately struck with a leprosy, which he carried with him to his grave.

10. Joatham, son of Ozias, was a good prince, and reigned happily sixteen years. He was strengthened by the Lord, with the scripture, *because*

because he made his ways right before the Lord his God.

11. Achaz, son of Joatham, was very wicked and very unhappy, during his whole reign of sixteen years.

12. Ezechias, son of Achaz, restored religion again, which his father had turned out of doors and totally abolished idolatry. He had for his director the great prophet Isaias; and as he sought the Lord with all his heart, he was highly favoured by him. In his days, Sennacherib king of the Assyrians, invaded Judea with an immense army, and sought to make himself master of Jerusalem; blaspheming the Lord, whom Ezechias put his trust. But this good prince was secure under the divine protection, which he was assured by the prophet, 4 King. xix. *Thus saith the Lord, be not afraid, for the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of the Assyrians have blasphemed me. Behold I will send a spirit upon him, &c. and he shall return into his own country; and I will make him fall by the sword in his own country. He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow into it, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a trench about it. By the way that he came he shall return; and into this city he shall not come, saith the Lord. And I will protect this city, and I will save it for my own sake, and for David my servant's sake, saith the Lord.* “ And it came to pass the same night, that an angel of the Lord came and slew, in the camp of the Assyrians, a hundred and fourscore and five thousand men. “

“ and eighty-five thousand. And when he arose
 “ early in the morning, he saw all dead bodies.
 “ And Sennacherib, king of the Assyrians, de-
 “ parting, went away, and he returned to Ni-
 “ nive. And as he was worshipping in the
 “ temple of Nesroch his god, Adramelec and
 “ Sarasar, his sons, slew him with the sword,
 “ &c.” O how good is the Lord to his ser-
 “ vants ! O how terrible is his avenging justice in
 the punishment of his enemies !

Ezechias being grievously sick, was bid by the
 prophet Isaías to set his house in order, and to
 prepare himself for death. But, upon his prayers
 and tears, the Lord was pleased to grant him a
 reprieve of fifteen years, and to heal him by the
 prophet. Moreover, he wrought a wonderful
 sign in his favour, by causing the sun to return
 back ten degrees. On this occasion, the king of
 Babylon sent him an embassy ; in which, Eze-
 chias took great complacency, and shewed all
 his treasures to the ambassadors. For which va-
 nity he was reprov'd by Isaías, who foretold him,
 on that occasion, that all his treasures should one
 day be carried away to Babylon.

13. Ezechias dying after he had reigned
 twenty-nine years, was succeeded by his son
 Manasses, a boy of twelve years old. He reigned
 five and fifty years, and did evil beyond all that
 had gone before him. Insomuch, that he set up
 an idol in the very temple of the Lord, and pro-
 ved both the courts of the temple with sacri-
 ficious altars, and filled Jerusalem with innocent
 blood.

blood. In punishment of his sins, he fell into the hands of the Assyrians, and was carried away in chains to Babylon. Where, finding himself in the extremity of misery, he entered into himself, and became a sincere penitent : then praying to the Lord, he was delivered from his captivity, and restored to his kingdom. After which, he relapsed no more into his former crimes.

14. Amon, the son of Manasses, succeeded in the kingdom, and imitating his father's sins, but not his repentance, within two years fell a victim to divine justice, and was slain in his sins.

15. Josias, the son of Amon, was a godly prince. He restored religion, and utterly abolished idolatry and superstition, not only out of Judea, but also out of the cities of Samaria. The Spirit of God gives him this character (4 Kings xxiii.) *That there was no king before him like unto him, that returned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his strength : neither after him did there arise any like him.* After a peaceable reign of one and thirty years, going out unadvisedly to fight against Necho king of Egypt, he was slain in battle ; and much lamented by his people, particularly by Jeremias the prophet.

16. Joachaz, alias Sellum, was made king by the people after the death of his father Josias. But he walked not in his father's footsteps ; and after three months was deposed by king Necho, and carried away into Egypt.

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17. Joakim, the eldest son of Josias, was advanced to the throne by the king of Egypt. He was a very wicked prince, and very unhappy in his reign. He fell into the hands of Nabuchadnezzar, who carried him in chains to Babylon; at which time also Daniel and the three children were made captives, and part of the sacred vessels were carried away from the temple. Joakim seems to have recovered his liberty, upon condition of serving the king of Babylon: but after three years, he revolted from him. He reigned eleven years; and then dying in his sins, left his kingdom to his son Joachin.

18. Joachin, alias Jechonias, walked in his father's footsteps; but within three months was deposed by Nabuchadnezzar, and was carried captive to Babylon, with all his nobles and his captains, and thousands of the choicest of his soldiers and craftsmen, together with all the treasures and golden vessels of the temple which Solomon had made. This prince, in his captivity, turned to the Lord, and was penitent for his sins, as appears from Baruch i. 3. &c. and after the death of Nabuchadnezzar, was highly favoured and exalted by his son and successor Evilmerodach.

19. Sedecias, uncle to Joachin, was made king in his stead, swearing fidelity to the king of Babylon; but breaking his oath, and doing otherwise evil in the sight of the Lord, he brought upon himself and his people the Chaldean army, and all the miseries of war, famine

and pestilence, described by the prophets Jeremias and Ezekiel. In the eleventh year of his reign Jerusalem was taken, and he fell into the hands of Nabuchadnezzar, who slew his sons before his face, then pluckt out his eyes, and brought him bound with chains to Babylon. He slew also all his chief-men, and carried the rest into captivity, after destroying the city and burning the temple. And thus divine justice, so long provoked by a stiffneck'd people, put an end to the kingdom of Judah.

As to the ark of the covenant, and the tabernacle, and the altar of incense, which were kept in the temple, it is recorded, 2 Machab. ii. from the descriptions of Jeremias, that at the time of the destruction of the temple, this prophet (who had found favour with the Chaldeans) " being warned by God, ordered them to be
" carried out with him to mount Nebo; where
" he found a hollow cave, in which he deposited
" them, and so stopped up the entry. And that
" when some of his followers would have marked
" the place, they could not find it. On which
" occasion, the prophet blamed them, saying
" The place shall be unknown, till God gather
" together the congregation of the people, and
" receive them to his mercy; and then the Lord
" will shew these things."

'Tis also recorded, 2 Machab. i. 19, &c.
" That on the same occasion, the priests, who
" then were worshippers of God, took privately
" the sacred fire from the altar, and hid it in

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" valley, where there was a pit without water.
 " And that when many years were passed, and
 " it pleased God that Nehemias was sent by the
 " king of Persia, he sent some of the posterity
 " of those priests that had hid it, to seek for the
 " fire : these found no fire in the place, but only
 " thick water ; which Nehemias bid them draw
 " up, and bring it to him. Then he ordered
 " the wood and the sacrifices that were laid on
 " the altar to be sprinkled with that same water.
 " And when this was done, and the sun, which
 " had been under a cloud, shone out, a great
 " fire was kindled, and consumed the sacrifices."
 Now this miraculous recovery of the holy fire,
 which was ordered to be always kept burning on
 God's altar, was celebrated with an annual festi-
 val, as we learn from the same chapter, verse 18.
 After the destruction of the city and of the tem-
 ple, and the carrying away of great numbers
 into captivity, Godolias, the son of Ahicam,
 was made governor over the small remains of
 the people ; and the captains, that had been dis-
 persed, resorted to him. But he being murdered
 by Ismael, one of their number, all the rest, for
 fear of the Chaldeans, fled away into Egypt,
 contrary to what the Lord ordered them by the
 prophet Jeremias, whom they took along with
 them, but would not hearken to him. He re-
 prehended their idolatry in Egypt and denounced
 them that they should all perish there, and
 never return home. And the tradition of the

Hebrews is, that here at length they stoned the prophet to death.

C H A P. VI.

The History of the People of God in Captivity.

The captivity of Babylon was sent as a judgment upon the Jews for their idolatry and other crimes: but this judgment was so tempered with mercy, that they who were carried away captives, by the grace of God, became penitents; and by his favour, were, in a little time, far more happy than they that were left behind; and although they had neither temple nor sacrifice, and they lived in the midst of the most wicked city in the world, yet they maintained their religion, and observed the divine law, much better than they had done when they were at liberty in Jerusalem. See Jeremias xxiv. and Baruch i. The chief particulars of the history of this time are recorded in the book of Daniel.

Daniel, and the Three Children.

At the time that king Joakim first fell into the hands of Nabuchadnezzar, (from which the seventy years of the Babylonish captivity are usually dated) four youths of royal blood were carried away to Babylon, whose names were Daniel,

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Ananias, Misael and Azarias. These, by orders
 of Nabuchadnezzar, were taken into his palace,
 to be instructed in the learning and the tongue
 of the Chaldeans, that they might be qualified
 to stand before the king. Who also appointed
 them a daily provision of his own meats, and of
 the wine of which he himself drank. But the
 pious youths fearing lest they should be defiled
 with the king's table, petitioned the officer, who
 had the charge over them, to give them pulse
 (or garden stuff) to eat, instead of the king's
 meats, and water to drink: and with this kind
 of food their faces appeared fairer and fatter than
 any of the children who eat of the king's meat.
 And to these children God gave knowledge and
 understanding in every book, and wisdom: but
 Daniel also, a prophetick light for the under-
 standing of visions and dreams. And when, af-
 ter three years, they were brought in before the
 king, and were examined by him, he found
 them ten times more learned than any of the
 young men of his kingdom.

The History of Susanna.

Daniel was as yet very young, but had al-
 ready acquired a great esteem among the people
 for his wisdom, when he saved the life of Su-
 sanna. There were at that time two old men
 who were appointed judges for the Jews in Baby-
 lon. These frequented the house of Joakim, the
 husband of Susanna, and by often seeing her
 going

going in to walk in her husband's orchard, were inflamed with lust towards her; for she was exceeding beautiful. At length they discovered their passion to each other, and watching for an opportunity of finding her alone in the orchard, made their wicked proposals to her; threatening her withal, that if she did not consent to their lust, they would swear against her that they had taken her in adultery. Susanna, who from a child had been brought up in the fear of God, rejected with horror the proposal, and cried out with a loud voice. The elders also cried out against her; and when the servants of the house rushed into the orchard to see what was the matter, they pretended they had found a young man with her. The next day, when the people were come to the house of Joakim, the two old men cited Susanna to appear before them, and made themselves both accusers and witnesses against her; and procured that she should be condemned to death for adultery. Susanna weeping looked up to heaven, for her heart had confidence in the Lord. And she cried aloud to the Lord the witness of her innocence; and he was pleased to hear her. And when she was led away to be put to death, the Spirit of the Lord moved Daniel, then a young boy, to cry out: I am innocent of the blood of this woman: return to judgment ye children of Israel; for they have borne false witness against her. So all the people turned again in haste, and the old men said to him, "Come and sit thou down among us, and she

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it us; seeing God hath given thee the honour of old age. And Daniel said to the people, Separate these two far from one another, and I will examine them. Which when they had done, Daniel examining them apart, in presence of the people, by their contradicting one another in the account they gave, convicted them of being false witnesses. With that all the assembly cried out with a loud voice; and they blessed God, who saveth them that trust in him. And they rose up against the two elders, and condemned them to that death which they had designed for the innocent."

Nabuchadnezzar's Dream.

This king had a dream, with which he was very much terrified in his sleep; but afterwards quite went out of his mind. He sends therefore for all his wisemen, and his diviners, and astrologers, and requires of them that they should tell him his dream, and the interpretation of it: and as they were not able to tell his dream, he charges them with being impostors, and orders that they all should be put to death. Daniel hearing of this edict, begged that a stop might be put to the execution of it, and that he might be given him, and that he would resolve the question and declare it to the king. When he went into his house, and invited his three companions to join with him in humble prayer,

prayer, that the Lord in his mercy would reveal this secret, to the end that they might not perish with all the wisemen of Babylon. And God was pleased to hear their prayer, and to reveal the mystery to Daniel in a vision by night; for which favour he most heartily blessed and praised the Lord. Then being brought before the king he told him his dream; that he had seen in his sleep a tall statue of a terrible aspect standing before him; the head of it was of gold, the breast and the arms of silver, the belly and the thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet part of iron and part of clay; that thus he saw it, till a stone was cut out of a mountain without hands and struck the statue on its feet, and reduced the whole to dust; and the stone became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. Then as to the interpretation, he told the king that the dream was prophetic, God being pleased to foreshew by it what was to come to pass in the latter times: that the statue denoted four great kingdoms, which should successively rule the world: but the stone that was cut out of a mountain without hands, denoted a kingdom which the God of heaven should set up, (viz. the kingdom of Christ in his church) which should subdue all other kingdoms, and stand forever. Nabuchadnezzar, upon hearing this, fell down upon his face to worship Daniel, acknowledging that his God was the God of gods. He also promoted him in honour, and at his request appointed his three companions (whose names

he changed to Sidrach, Misach and Abednago) to be over the works of the province of Babylon; but Daniel himself he kept in his palace.

The three Children in the firey Furnace.

After this, Nabuchadnezzar set up a statue of gold of fifty cubits high in the plain of Dura, and assembled all his nobles, governors, and magistrates, and all the chief men of his provinces, at the dedication of it; giving orders, that upon hearing the sound of the trumpet, and the concert of all other musical instruments, all should prostrate themselves and adore the statue he had erected, under pain of being cast into a furnace burning fire. The three young men, Sidrach, Misach and Abednago, being called upon on this occasion, resolutely told the king, that they would not worship his gods, nor adore the statue he had erected. Upon this their declaration, the king in a great fury ordered that the furnace should be heated seven times more than had been accustomed; and commanded the strongest men that were in his army to bind the young men and cast them into the fire; which the soldiers immediately executed with the loss of their own lives, being killed by the flame. At an angel of the Lord went down with the three servants of God into the furnace, and he drove the flame of fire out of the furnace, and made the midst of the furnace like the blowing of a cold wind; and the fire touched them not

at all, nor did them any harm. This wonder of the almighty power and goodness of God, which thus declared itself in their favour, excited the three children to praise and glorify the Lord with all their strength, and to invite the whole creation to join with them in blessing him: nor was it long before the king himself perceived the miracle, and said to his nobles: "Did we not cast three men bound in the midst of the fire?" Behold, I see four men loose, and walking in the midst of the furnace without hurt; and the form of the fourth is like a son of God. Then going up to the door of the flaming furnace, he called upon these servants of the most high God to come forth to him; and immediately they came out from the midst of the fire. And the king, and all that were with him, considering them found, that the fire had had no power at all on them, nor much as singed their hair or their garments. This evident miracle obliged Nabuchadnezzar to give glory to their God, and to publish an edict, by which he forbid the blaspheming of him under pain of death.

The judgment of God upon Nabuchadnezzar for his pride.

The Lord was pleased, after this, to denote to this king in a dream, the judgments which were going to fall upon him for his sins. Daniel, who interpreted this dream to him, advised

to prevent the execution of the sentence that
 stood out against him from the most High, by
 redeeming his sins by alms deeds, and his ini-
 quities by being merciful to the poor : and per-
 haps, said he, he will forgive thee thy offences.
 But this prince does not seem to have followed
 his advice ; for at the end of twelve months he
 was walking in his palace, and priding himself
 in the strength of his power, and his great at-
 achievements, by which he had raised Babylon
 to that height of empire, when a voice came
 down from heaven, denouncing to him, " that
 his kingdom should pass from him ; and that
 they should cast him out from among men,
 and that his dwelling should be with beasts :
 that he should eat grass like an ox, and that
 seven times, or seasons should pass over him,
 till he should know and acknowledge that the
 most High ruleth over the kingdoms of men,
 and giveth them to whom he pleaseth." All
 this was immediately fulfilled ; for the king pre-
 sently lost his reason and became mad : and in
 this condition remained abroad in the company
 of beasts, feeding upon grass for seven seasons,
 till his hair grew in such manner as to resemble
 the feathers of eagles, and his nails to be like
 birds claws. At the end of the days, he looked
 up to heaven, and his sense was restored to him,
 and he gave glory to God. And his nobles
 sought for him, and brought him back to his
 throne. From whence he published an authen-
 tick account of what had happened to him ;

which he concludes with these words : " There-
 " fore I Nabuchadnezzar do now praise and
 " magnify, and glorify the king of heaven, be-
 " cause all his works are true, and his way
 " judgments, and them that walk in pride he is
 " able to abase."

The Reign of King Evilmerodach.

Nabuchadnezzar dying, had for his successor his son Evilmerodach, a favourer of the Jews as appears by his immediately exalting king Jehonias. He is believed to be the king, who having discovered, by the contrivance of Daniel the imposture of the priests of Bel, destroyed both them and their god : after which he gave Daniel leave to make away with a great serpent which the Babylonians worshipped : with which the people were so much enraged, that they charged the king with being turned Jew ; and rising up against him, they obliged him to deliver up Daniel, whom they immediately cast into a den, in which there were seven lions ; where he remained six days untouched. Here he was visited by the prophet Habakuk, brought by an angel from Judea, with a provision of pottage and bread for his support. " On the seventh day the king came to bewail Daniel ; and
 " looked into the den, and behold Daniel was
 " sitting in the midst of the lions. And
 " the king cried out with a loud voice, Great
 " thou, O Lord, the God of Daniel ! And

" drew

There- drew him out of the den. But those that had
 life and been the cause of his condemnation, he cast
 en, be- into the den, and they were devoured in a
 s way moment before him."

*King Baltassar's profane Banquet ; his
 Punishment.*

ch. The last of the Chaldean kings was Baltassar,
 or grandson to Nabuchadnezzar. He made
 a great feast for a thousand of his nobles ; and
 being now elevated with wine, he ordered the
 golden and silver vessels to be brought him,
 which had been taken out of the temple of Jeru-
 salem ; and both he and all his guests, his wives
 and concubines, drank out of them, giving
 praises to their false gods and idols. When be-
 fore there appeared fingers, as it were of the
 hand of a man, writing upon the wall over-
 against the candlestick ; which the king per-
 ceiving, was greatly terrified. And when none
 of his wisemen were able to read the writing,
 much less to interpret it, Daniel was sent for ;
 who, after remonstrating to the king how much
 he had offended the Lord of heaven by profaning
 the sacred vessels, read to him the writing, which
 contained no more than these three words,
 MANE, THEKEL, PHARES. Which Daniel
 interpreted in this manner : MANE, God hath
 numbered thy kingdom, and hath finished it.
 THEKEL, Thou art weighed in the ballance,
 and art found wanting. PHARES, Thy king-
 dom

dom is divided, and is given to the Medes and Persians. Immediately, by the king's command, Daniel was clothed in purple, and a chain of gold was put about his neck; and it was proclaimed of him, that he had power as the third man in the kingdom. That same night Baltassar, the Chaldean king, was slain; and Darius, the Mede, succeeded in the kingdom.

The Reign of Darius the Mede.

This king also highly favoured Daniel, and made him one of the three chief governors of his kingdom, which drew upon him the envy of the other great ones. These not finding any other way that they could hope to bring him into disgrace with the king, but on the score of his religion, in which they knew he was very constant and godly, presented an address to Darius in the name of all the nobles of the kingdom requiring a decree to be set forth, by his authority, forbidding any petition to be made to any God or man for the space of thirty days, only to himself, under pain of being cast into the den of the lions. This strange decree was accordingly published with all formality, and signed by the king, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which did not allow any royal edict ever to be reversed. Daniel hearing of this law, went into his house, and opening the windows in his upper chamber towards Jerusalem, knelt down to his prayers, and there adored

and gave thanks to his God, as he had always been accustomed to do, three times in the day. His enemies had their spies upon him, and having found him praying and making supplication to his God, accused him to the king as a transgressor of the law, and perfectly forced this prince, much against his will, to deliver up Daniel to be cast into the den of the lions. This was the second time that Daniel was lodged amongst the lions; but the first time he was in the den for six days, this second time only for one night. For the king, who could not sleep that night, through the concern he had for Daniel, rising very early in the morning, went in haste to the lions den, and cried out with a mournful voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, hath thy God, whom thou servest always, been able to deliver thee from the lions? And Daniel answering, said, O king, live for ever: my God hath sent his angel, and hath shut up the mouths of the lions, and they have not hurt me; forasmuch as before him justice hath been found in me; yea, and before thee, O king, I have done no offence. Then the king commanded he should be taken out of the den, and that his accusers should be cast in; who scarce reached the bottom of the den before the lions caught them and broke all their bones in pieces." Upon this, king Darius published an edict, commanding all the subjects of his empire to dread

and fear the living and eternal God, whom Daniel worshipped.

CH A P. VII.

The History of Tobit, Judith and Esther.

Tobit, or Tobias.

TOBIT was a native of the tribe and city of Nephthali, who from his very childhood feared the Lord, and was a close observer of the divine law. He never bent his knees to the calves of Jeroboam, but went to Jerusalem to the temple of the Lord, and there adored the God of Israel, offering his first-fruits and tithes to him. When he was a man, he took to wife Anna of his own tribe, and had of her a son, to whom he named Tobias, and from his infancy he taught him to fear God, and to abstain from all sin. And now Salmanasar, king of the Assyrians, having taken Samaria, and put an end to the kingdom of the ten tribes, carried away Israel into captivity: and Tobit, with his wife and child, was brought to Ninive; where, in the midst of infidels, and in a most wicked city, he was still mindful of the Lord with all his heart; and the Lord was pleased to give him favour in the sight of Salmanasar the king: in

much, that he gave him leave to go whitherso-
 ever he would, with liberty to do whatever he
 had a mind. He went therefore to all that were
 in captivity, and gave them wholesome admo-
 nitions. At which time, coming to Rages, a
 city of the Medes, and finding there Gabelus,
 one of his kindred, in want, he lent him ten
 talents of the money he had by the king's boun-
 ty, taking his note of hand for the payment.

After the death of Salmanasar, his successor
 Sennacherib hating the children of Israel, Tobit
 daily went amongst all his kindred, and com-
 forted them, and distributed to every one as he
 was able out of his goods. He fed the hungry,
 and clothed the naked, and was careful to bury
 the dead and them that were slain. But when
 Sennacherib returning from Judea, where his
 army was destroyed by an angel in one night,
 saw many of the children of Israel. Tobit was
 accused to him for burying their dead bodies,
 and the tyrant commanded him to be slain, and
 his substance to be confiscated. He fled away
 with his wife and son, and lay concealed; for
 many loved him: but after five and forty days
 the king was killed by his own sons; and the
 want of God returned home, and all his sub-
 stance was restored to him. He followed on the
 course of life, till God was pleased, for his
 piety and his improvement in virtue, as well as
 the manifestation of his patience, for an ex-
 ample to posterity, to permit that an accident
 should befall him, by which he lost his sight.

For

For whereas he had always feared God from his infancy and kept his commandments, he repined not against God, because the evil of blindness had befallen him; but continued immoveable in the fear of God, giving thanks to him all the days of his life. And when his relations and kinsmen took occasion, from his blindness, to mock at his life, saying, Where is now thy hope for which thou gavest alms and buriedst the dead. He rebuked them, saying, Speak not so; for we are the children of saints, and look for that life, which God will give to them who never change their faith from him. Tobit was four years under this trial, which was aggravated to him by his wife, who also joined with them that reproached and upbraided him. Upon which he addressed his prayer to the Lord with many tears acknowledging the justice of all the divine ways and begging that God would not remember his sins, nor those of his parents; but that, if it were his holy will, he would command his spirit to be received in peace.

And now the holy man thinking he should die, called to him his son, to give him, as he thought, his last instructions; diligently instructing to him his duty to his mother, but about all things, that all the days of his life he should have God in his mind, and take heed never to consent to any sin; but especially that he should guard against all impurity, and against pride the mother of all mischief. With other excellent lessons, dictated by the Spirit of God.

the conclusion he put him in mind of the ten talents he had lent to Gabelus, and desired him to seek some trusty man to go with him as far as Rages, that he might receive that money. Tobias went out, and met with a beautiful young man, girded as it were for a journey; and not knowing him to be an angel, enquired of him if he knew the way to the country of the Medes. He answered, that he knew all the roads of that country, and that he had been with Gabelus, who dwelt in Rages. Upon this, Tobias introduced him to his father, and he recommended his son to his charge.

They set out upon their journey, and they lodged the first night by the river Tigris. Here Tobias going out to wash his feet in the river, was assaulted by a great fish. He cried out for help; and the angel (who called himself by the name of Azarias, which in Hebrew signifies *the Angel of God*) encouraged him to lay hold on the tail of the fish and bring it to the land. He did so, and then taking out the entrails, he laid up, in the direction of the angel, the heart, the gall, and the liver, for useful medicines; but the fish was roasted, and took with them in the way, eating as much of it as might serve them till they came to Rages. And now they were far advanced in their journey, when the angel informed Tobias, that there was in the neighbourhood a near relation of his father, whose name was Raguel, who had a daughter named Sara, his only child, and that he should ask her in marriage,

marriage, and that all their substance should come to him. Tobias answered, "I hear that she hath been given to seven husbands, and they all died: moreover, I have heard that a devil killed them. Now I am afraid, lest the same thing should happen to me also. Hear me, said the angel, and I will shew thee who they are over whom the devil can prevail. For they, who in such manner receive matrimony as to shut out God from themselves, and from their mind, and to give themselves to their lust, as the horse and mule, which have not understanding, over them the devil hath power. But thou, when thou shalt take her, go into the chamber, and for three days keep thyself continent from her, and give thyself to prayers with her. And on the first night lay the liver of the fish on the fire, and the devil shall be driven away. And when the third night is past, thou shalt take the virgin with the fear of the Lord, moved rather for the love of children than for lust, that in the seed of Abraham thou mayest obtain a blessing in children."

When they came to Raguel's house he received them kindly; and being told that Tobias was his kinsman's son, he embraced him, saying with tears, A blessing be upon thee, my son, because thou art the son of a good and a most virtuous man. He also ordered a feast to be prepared for them. Tobias, as instructed by the angel, demanded his daughter in marriage. And here

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Raguel, knowing what had happened to the others that had taken her before, stood in suspense, giving no answer, till the angel encouraged him, saying, Be not afraid to give her to this man; for to him who feareth God is thy daughter due, and therefore another could not have her. Then Raguel consented, and taking the right hand of his daughter, he gave it into the right hand of Tobias, saying, The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob be with you, and may he join you together and fulfil his blessing in you.

At night, Tobias was careful to observe all the prescriptions of the angel, and took a part of the liver of the fish and laid it upon burning coals, and invited his bride to join with him in prayer. In the mean time the angel took the devil away, and bound him in the desert of the upper Egypt. The next day they celebrated the marriage feast with decent joy, and with the fear of the Lord. And the angel, at the desire of Tobias, went forward to Rages, and received the money of Gabelus, and brought him to the wedding.

After a fortnight spent in Raguel's house, Tobias set out upon his journey home; his father-in-law giving him, for his wife's portion, one half of his substance in hand; the rest to come to him after the death of her parents. And now the angel proposed to him, that they two should go before, that they might sooner bring comfort to his afflicted parent. He also bid him take
with

with him of the gall of the fish. And when they drew near to the city, he said to him, As soon as thou shalt come into thy house, forthwith adore the Lord thy God; and giving thanks to him, go to thy father and kiss him: and immediately anoint his eyes with the gall of the fish, and they shall be opened. Tobias did as he was directed, and when he had anointed his father's eyes with the gall, within half an hour a white skin began to come out of his eyes like the skin of an egg; and Tobias took hold of it and drew it from his eyes, and immediately he recovered his sight. And they all glorified God. After seven days, Sara, the wife of Tobias, arrived safe with her servants, and all her substance, cattle and money. And Tobias having told his parents all the benefits of God, which he had done to him, by the person that conducted him, the father and the son calling him aside, begged that he would accept of, for his services, half of all things that they had brought.

Then he said to them secretly: " Bless ye
 " God of heaven, and give glory to him in
 " sight of all that live, because he has shewed
 " his mercy to you. For it is good to hide
 " secret of a king; but honourable to reveal
 " confess the works of God. Prayer is good
 " with fasting and alms, more than to lay
 " treasures of gold; for alms delivereth from
 " death, and the same is that which purgeth
 " away sins, and maketh to find mercy
 " life everlasting. But they that commit

and iniquity, are enemies to their own souls. I discover then the truth unto you, and I will not hide the secret from you. When thou didst pray with tears, and didst bury the dead, and didst leave thy dinner, and didst hide the dead by day in thy house, and bury them by night, I offered thy prayer to the Lord. And because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee. And now the Lord hath sent me to heal thee, and to deliver Sara, thy son's wife, from the devil: for I am the angel Raphael, one of the seven who stand before the Lord. Now when they had heard these things they were troubled, and being seized with fear they fell upon the ground on their face. And the angel said to them, Peace be to you, fear not: for when I was with you, I was with you by the will of God: bless ye him, and sing praises to him. I seemed indeed to eat and to drink with you; but I use an invisible meat and drink, which cannot be seen by men. It is time therefore that I return to him that sent me. But bless ye God, and publish all his wonderful works. Which when he had said, he was withdrawn from their sight, and they could see him no more. But they continued for three hours lying prostrate upon their face and blessing God: then rising up, they published all his wonderful works."

Tobit was sixty years old when he recovered his sight: after which he lived two and forty

K , years

years in joy, and with great increase of the fear of God, and then departed in peace. His son Tobias lived ninety-nine years, and saw his children's children to the fifth generation. And all his progeny continued in good life and holy conversation, so that they were acceptable both to God and to men.

Judith.

Judith was a lady of the tribe of Simeon, of the city of Bethulia, who being left a widow by her husband Manasses, with a plentiful fortune, consecrated her widowhood to devotion and penance: insomuch, that she made herself a private chamber in the upper part of her house, in which she abode shut up with her maids, and wore a haircloth upon her loins, and fasted all the days of her life, except the sabbaths and the feasts of the house of Israel. She was exceedingly beautiful, but made no account of her beauty, and was greatly renowned among all for her virtue, because she feared the Lord very much; neither was there any one that spoke an ill word of her.

In those days Nabuchadnezzar, (not the king of Babylon, who sacked Jerusalem, but another who was king of the Assyrians and reigned in Ninive) having overcome the king of the Medes, was so puffed up with this victory as to take it in his head to bring the whole earth under his dominion. In order to do this, he sent his ge-

neral

The fear of the Lord was upon the king of Assyria, and he sent his son Sennacherib, with a mighty army against all the kingdoms of the west, with a commission to lay them waste, to destroy their cities and their temples; to the end that he alone might be acknowledged lord and god by all those nations. After having wasted many other regions, his army drew near to Judea; where the people of God was greatly alarmed, fearing lest he should come to Jerusalem and to the temple of the Lord, as he had done to other cities and their temples. They made what preparations they could to defend themselves against so formidable an enemy; and they cried to the Lord God of Israel with great earnestness for his assistance, and humbled their souls in fastings and prayers. And now Sennacherib having staid thirty days in Idumea to unite his forces together, advanced with them; and laid siege to Bethulia, a city so strongly situated amongst the mountains, that it could not be taken by assault. But he found means of reducing the citizens to the utmost extremity, by cutting off the aqueduct which furnished them with water; so that in a short time, their cisterns being emptied, there was not left within the city water enough to satisfy them, not so much as for one day. In this distress, the people assembling together begged of Ozias, the governor, that they might give themselves up to the Assyrians, and rather live in captivity under them, or die by their swords, than that both they and their wives and children should perish by a more lingering and dismal death, by the drought of thirst.

Ozias sought to encourage them to trust in the Lord; and after they had for some hours joined in crying to the Lord and confessing their sin with many tears, he exhorted them to wait for mercy from the Lord five days, and if no aid came within that time, he would then deliver up the city.

The holy widow Judith hearing of this, sent for Ozias and the ancients, and remonstrated to them how ill they had done in setting a time for the mercy of the Lord, and appointing him a day, instead of humbly waiting for his time with an entire confidence in him, and conforming with his will. Then she signified to them the intention God had inspired her with of attempting something for their delivery. "You shall stand," said she, "at the gate this night, and I will go out with my maid-servant; and pray ye as you have said, that within five days the Lord may look down upon his people Israel." "But I desire that you search not into what I am doing; and till I bring you word, let nothing else be done, but to pray for me to the Lord God." Then the ancients departing, she went into her oratory, and there lying prostrate in sackcloth and ashes, she poured out her prayer before the Lord, that he might give his blessing to her undertaking, for the greater glory of his own name and the salvation of his people. After which, she put off her haircloth and away the garments of her widowhood, and dressed herself out in her best attire, and adorned

herself with all her ornaments : and as in all
 this her intention was pure, the Lord added to
 her beauty, so that she appeared in all men's eyes
 incomparably lovely. And she gave to her maid
 a bottle of wine to carry, and a vessel of oil,
 and parched corn, and dry figs, and bread and
 cheese, for their provision, and went out. At
 the gate of the city they found Ozias and the
 ancients, who let her pass, asking no questions,
 but only praying to God to strengthen her. She
 went down the hill, and about break of day the
 watchmen of the Assyrians met her, and stopped
 her. And as she told them she was a daughter
 of the Hebrews, who was come away, because
 he knew they would be made a prey to them,
 and that she desired to be introduced to the pre-
 sence of their general, they brought her to the
 tent of Holofernes ; who no sooner saw her, but
 was in love with her. And having heard the
 cause of her coming, he appointed her a lodging
 in the tent where his treasures were laid up, and
 gave orders to his chamberlains, that she might
 go out and in, as she pleased, to adore her God
 in the night, in the valley of Bethulia, as she
 had desired of him.

On the fourth day Holofernes invited her to
 supper, and as she eat and drank with him of
 the things her maid had prepared for her, his
 passion for her was so inflamed, that he drank on
 that occasion more plentifully of wine than ever
 he had done in his life. At night, his servants
 retired to their lodgings, and they were all over-
 charged

charged with wine, so Judith was left alone in the chamber : but Holofernes lay on his bed fast asleep, being exceedingly drunk : and she spoke to her maid to stand before the door and to watch. Then Judith stood before the bed, praying with tears in silence to the Lord for his help and assistance ; and drawing out the sword, or scymiter, that hung at the bed's head, she took him by the hair of his head, and said, *Strengthen me, O Lord God, at this hour.* And she struck twice upon his neck, and cut off his head ; and she went out and gave it to her maid to put it into her wallet. Then they two went out according to their custom, as if it were to prayer, and they passed the camp, and having compassed the valley they came to the gate of the city. And Judith called to the watchmen upon the walls *Open the gates, for God is with us.* And they called the ancients of the city, and all the people ran to meet her ; and lighting up lights, they all gathered round about her : and she said, " Praise ye the Lord our God, who hath not forsaken them that hope in him. And by me his handmaid hath fulfilled his mercy, which he promised to the house of Israel : and he hath killed the enemy of his people by my hand this night." Then she brought forth the head of Holofernes out of the wallet and shewed it them. And at the same time called the Lord to witness, that his angel had been her keeper all the time she had been there, as well as in her going thither and coming back, and he had no

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alone in- permitted her to be defiled with sin. Upon
bed fast- which all the people adored God and gave praise
he spoke him.

and to At break of day, as Judith had directed, they
d, pray- ung up the head of Holofernes upon the walls,
his help- and every man took his arms, and they rushed
word, on- ut of the city with a great noise and shouting,
he took- y make an assault upon the camp of the Assy-
strength- ans. These going to rouse their general on
e struck- is occasion, and finding him weltering in his
ad; and- ood without a head, raised a great cry in the
to put it- mp; and such a panick seized upon the whole
out ac- my, that all courage and counsel departing
o prayer- om them, they thought of nothing but saving
compassi- themselves by flight, leaving all things behind
city. And- em. Ozias pursued after them, and sent mes-
he walls- sengers to all the cities and countries of Israel;
And they- d they also sent out their choicest young men
he people- er them, who killed all they could overtake,
, they al- d they came to the extremities of the confines
," Praise- Israel. And all the people were enriched with
t forsake- ir spoils, and gave glory to their great de-
his hand- merer.

n he pro- Judith lived many years after this to see the good
he hath- ings of Jerusalem; and continued to the end
my hand- e virtuous and godly life she had begun, till
n the hea- ng one hundred and five years old, she de-
shewed- ed in peace.

he Lord to
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Esther.

Esther.

In the days of the great king Assuerus, who reigned over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces from India to Ethiopia, there lived in the city of Susa, where the king kept his court, a Jew named Mardochai, who had with him a niece, a most beautiful maiden, whose name was Esther, whom he had adopted for his child, because she had lost both her parents. Now it happened, that the king having taken great offence at Vasthi his queen, for her disobedience, deposed her from her royal dignity, and sent orders to all his provinces for the most beautiful young virgins to be brought to him, among whom he might choose one to be his queen, instead of Vasthi. In this number Esther was presented to him, and she pleased him above all the other women, and he set the royal crown on her head, and made her his queen. Her uncle Mardochai chose to make his abode at the king's gate; and whilst he was there, he discovered that two of the eunuchs, who were porters, and presided in the first entry of the palace, had formed a design to murder the king. He acquainted the queen with this, and she told it to the king in Mardochai's name. And enquiry being made, they were found guilty, and were executed; and the whole account was recorded in the chronicles before the king

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After this, Aman, of the race of Agag, was advanced by the king to the height of honour, so that all the king's servants were ordered to bend their knees to him and worship him. Mardochai alone would not pay him this worship; at which he was highly offended; and understanding that he was a Jew, he was resolved to revenge himself upon the whole nation. He procured therefore, by the favour he had with the king, that letters should be sent for the destroying all the Jews that were in his dominions in one day, *viz.* on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the day which had come up by lot. Mardochai and all the Jews hearing this, lamented and mourned with fasting in sackcloth and ashes. And Mardochai informed the queen of it, desiring that she would go in to the king and intreat him for her people. She represented to him the danger she should be exposed to by going in without being sent for, contrary to the law; but desired that he and all the Jews in Susa would join in fasting and prayer for three days, and that she and her maids would do the same, and then she would venture to go in. Accordingly, the third day she presented herself before the king, and was most graciously received. She begged of the king to come, and to bring Aman with him, to a banquet she had prepared; but she did not open her mind that day, but desired she might be honoured with the same company on the next day also. So Aman went out that day joyful and merry: but when he saw Mardochai sitting

at the palace gate, and that he did not so much as move from the place where he was, to shew him any honour, he was exceeding angry; and returning to his house, he declared to his wife and his friends, that with all his riches and glory, he could have no satisfaction, as long as he saw that Jew sitting before the king's gate. Upon this, they advised him to order a gibbet to be prepared fifty cubits high, and in the morning to speak to the king, that Mardochai might be hanged upon it.

That night the king passed without sleep, and he commanded the chronicles of former times to be read to him. When they came to that place where it was recorded that Mardochai had saved the king's life, by detecting the treason of the two eunuchs, he asked what honour and reward had Mardochai received for this fidelity. The servants said, none at all. Then the king asked who was in the court: for Aman was now come to desire that Mardochai might be hanged. When he was called in, the king asked him what ought to be done to the man whom the king was desirous to honour? He supposing that the king would honour no other but himself, answered, "The man whom the king desireth to honour, ought to be clothed with the king's apparel, and to be set upon the horse that the king rideth upon, and to have the royal crown upon his head; and let the first of the king's princes and nobles hold his horse, and going through the street of the city, proclaim before

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him and say, Thus shall he be honoured, whom the king hath a mind to honour. And the king said to him, Make haste and take the robe and the horse, and do as thou hast spoken to Mardochai the Jew, who sitteth before the gates of the palace: beware of omitting any of those things thou hast said." He durst do no otherwise than obey; and being thus awfully disappointed and mortified, he went with a heavy heart to the banquet, which was to be his last.

Here the king, after he was warm with wine, asked the queen what her petition was, assuring her it should be granted, although she should ask the half of his kingdom. She answered, that her petition was for her life, and for her people, who were given up to be massacred and totally destroyed, not excepting those of the king's own family, merely to gratify the cruelty of their enemy. And being asked who this was, she said, It is this Aman, that is our adversary and wicked enemy. Upon which the king, being exceedingly angry, resolved to put him to death; and being told by one of the eunuchs of the gibbet he had prepared for Mardochai, ordered that he should immediately be hanged upon it. After this, Mardochai was advanced to the place and dignity which Aman had occupied; and the edicts which this wicked man had sent in the name of the king to all the provinces, for the extermination of the Jews, were reversed by contrary letters. Thus was the people of God preserved

served from destruction: their mourning was turned into joy; and the day that had been appointed for the general massacre of them all, was ordered to be kept as a joyful festival by them and all their posterity.

C H A P. VIII.

The History of the People of God after the Captivity.

From the Books of Esdras, Nehemias, and the Machabees.

WHEN the seventy years of the Babylonian captivity, foretold by the prophet Jeremiah, were ended, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of the Persians, as he had promised by the prophet Isaiah, (chap. xlv.) to release his people from their captivity, and to send them home to Judea with a commandment to rebuild the temple of God in Jerusalem. He also ordered all the vessels of gold and silver which Nabuchadnezzar had brought away from the temple, to be restored to them, to the number of five thousand four hundred vessels. The chiefs that conducted the people back from the captivity, were Zorobabel, the grandson of Jehonias, who was made governor of Judea, Josue, or Jesus, the high priest: and the number of men, who returned with them, amount

all to forty-two thousand three hundred and
 sixty. These repairing to Jerusalem to celebrate
 there the feast of tabernacles, erected an altar for
 the daily sacrifices, and laid the foundations of
 the temple. But by the opposition of the Sama-
 ritans, they were hindered from carrying on the
 work till the second year of the reign of king
 Darius (Histaspis) whom God was pleased to
 move to favour the building, and to contribute
 to it. So they went on prosperously, encouraged
 by the prophets Aggai and Zacharias, and fi-
 nished the whole in the sixth year of the same
 king, and made a solemn dedication of it, to
 the great joy of those who had never seen the
 former temple in its glory; whilst the old men
 lamented to see how much this building fell short
 of that other. On this occasion, the Lord sent
 the prophet Aggai to comfort them, with these
 words, (chap. ii.) "Who is left among you,
 said the prophet, verse 4, &c. that saw this
 house in its first glory? And how do you see
 it now? Is it not as nothing in your eyes?
 Yet now take courage, O Zorobabel, &c.
 and all the people of the land: for I am with
 you, saith the Lord: yet one little while, and
 I will move the heaven and the earth, &c.
 and the Desired of all nations shall come; and
 I will fill this house with glory. Silver is
 mine, and gold is mine, saith the Lord of
 hosts. Great shall be the glory of this last
 house, more than of the first; and in this
 place I will give peace, saith the Lord of
 hosts."

" hosts." All which was verified by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

After this, in the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes (Longimanus) Esdras the priest, learned scribe in the law of Moses, went from Babylon to Jerusalem, with a great number of the children of Israel, and of the priests Levites, &c. in his company : being sent from the king to instruct and assist the people of God with a most gracious decree in their favour, and great presents to the temple of God. When he came to Jerusalem he found that many of the people had transgressed, by marrying with strangers and unbelievers, which was forbidden by the law of God, and was infinitely pernicious in its consequences. This their transgression afflicted this holy priest exceedingly, and he ceased not lamenting, weeping, and praying prostrate before the temple of God, till there was gathered to him an exceeding great assembly of men, women and children, who were all moved by his example to weep with much lamentation. And they all agreed to enter into a solemn covenant with the Lord their God, to put away their strange wives, and to be never more guilty of the like transgression.

In the twentieth year of the same king Artaxerxes, Nehemias who was cup-bearer to the king, obtained a license from him to go and build the walls of Jerusalem. In this work he met with great opposition from the Samaritans and other neighbouring nations : But began a

carri

carried on the building in spite of them all, and finished the whole in two and fifty days : so that all the enemies were obliged to acknowledge in this work the visible hand of God.

From this time the Jews lived in peace under the kings of Persia with full liberty as to the exercise of their religion ; and were more faithful in the observance of their law, and more exempt from idolatry than ever they had been. They even made many proselytes to their religion ; and by the opportunity of a great number of them, remaining in Babylon and in other parts of the Persian empire, they communicated the knowledge of the true God, to the Gentiles among whom they lived.

The power of the Persian empire as Daniel had foretold, was ruined by the Grecians, under the conduct of Alexander the Great, but his king made no alteration in the state of the Jews. They still enjoyed the free exercise of their religion, and their temple, both under him ; and under his captains, who after his death partitioned his empire amongst them ; till the days of Antiochus, surnamed Epiphanes. During that time they also spread themselves through all the provinces of the Grecian empire, and there likewise began to communicate to the gentiles the knowledge of the true God. 'Tis true, Seleucus Philopator, king of Syria, the eldest son of Antiochus the great, upon the information of Simon, a wicked man, that there were immense sums of money deposited in the temple,

sent his commissary Heliodorus with orders to seize upon all that money for the king's use. But here the Lord visibly interposed in defence of his house. For when Heliodorus entering into the treasury with his guards, was giving orders for the removing of the money, "the Spirit of the Almighty gave a great evidence of his presence, so that all who had presumed to obey him, falling down by the power of God, were struck with fainting and dread. For there appeared to them a horse with a terrible rider in golden armour, who ran up fiercely and struck Heliodorus with his fore feet. Moreover, there appeared two other beautiful young men in bright apparel, who coming on each side of him, scourged him with many stripes till he fell down to the ground speechless and senseless, and then was carried out of the temple in a litter, and lay without hope of recovery. His friends begged of Onias, the high priest, to pray to the Lord for his life: which when he was doing, the same young men, in the same clothing, stood by Heliodorus, and said to him, Give thanks to Onias the high priest because, for his sake, the Lord hath granted thee life. And thou having been scourged by God, declare to all men the great works and the power of God. And having spoken thus they appeared no more." 2 Mackab. iii.

King Seleucus did not long survive this sacrilegious attempt, being poisoned by the same Heliodorus, whom he had sent to pillage the temple.

temple. His brother Antiochus Epiphanes suc-
 ceeded in the kingdom, who was afterwards the
 great persecutor of the people of God. In the
 beginning of his reign, Jason, the brother of
 Onias, undermining his good brother, bought
 the high priesthood of Antiochus with a great
 sum of money; and began immediately to in-
 troduce amongst his countrymen the ways and
 customs of the heathens. This unhappy man,
 after some years, was undermined by Menelaus,
 who, by promising the king three hundred ta-
 lents more, purchased the high priesthood for
 himself, and was no less wicked than his prede-
 cessor. Thus the law of God being trodden
 under foot, and his worship set aside by those
 that were the chief priests and rulers of the peo-
 ple, many of all degrees imitated their apostasy,
 and dreadful times came on, which seem to have
 been foretold by the terrible signs in the heavens,
 which were seen for forty days over Jerusalem.
 Not long after, Antiochus coming with his
 army out of Egypt, took the city by storm, and
 in the space of three days he massacred fourscore
 thousand of the people; forty thousand others he
 made prisoners, and other forty thousand he
 sold for slaves. He also entered into the sanctu-
 ary of the temple, and took away the golden
 table, and the golden candlestick, and the table
 of shew-bread, and all the golden vessels and
 ornaments, and the treasures he found in the
 temple; and carried away with him one thou-
 sand eight hundred talents.

Two years after this he sent Apollonius with an army to Jerusalem, who fell upon the city suddenly, and made a great slaughter of the people; took their spoils, burnt their houses, and threw down the walls, and placed a strong garrison in the castle of Sion, which commanded the temple, and which was from this time a dreadful annoyance to the people of God. And now the tyrant published his edicts, by which he obliged the whole nation of the Jews to renounce their worship and law of God, and to sacrifice to idols, which he set up in every city, and at Jerusalem in the very sanctuary of the Lord, which he profaned with the image of Jupiter. And all that refused to comply with these edicts, were put to death without mercy. Great numbers suffered martyrdom by this persecution; among whom the most illustrious were, holy Eleazar and the seven brothers, who with their mother bravely vanquished the worst of torments, Mach. vi. vii. Many others fled away into deserts and mountains, and hid themselves in caves and dens, to be out of the reach of the persecutors. But the Lord did not forsake his people in this their extremity, but raised up Judas Maccabeus and his brethren, who gathering together as many as they could of those that were zealous for the law and for the worship of God, and putting their whole confidence in him, with a small number of men, gained many glorious victories over the numerous armies of Antiochus and his successors. Nor did they cease till they

recovered

recovered the city and temple out of their hands,
 regained the free exercise of their religion ; and
 not long after entirely shook off the Grecian
 yoke, and became themselves both high priests
 and sovereign princes of the people. In which
 dignity they were accepted of by the senate, or
 synhedrim, and by the whole nation of the Jews,
 to hold it for ever *till the faithful prophet should*
rise, (1 Mach. xiv. 41.) that is, till Christ the
 great king, priest and prophet, should come.
 Their descendants not long after put on the dia-
 dem, which they held till they were outed by
 Herod, who was made king by the Romans ;
 and then the sceptre being taken away from Ju-
 dah, the great *Shiloh* came, the promised Messias,
 to reign in the house of Jacob, that is, over all
 the true people of God, king and priest for ever,
 according to the order of Melchisedech.

F I N I S.



